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Mathias Goeritz: Minister of Change in Mexican Modern Art, 1949-1968

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Mathias Goeritz: Minister of Change in Mexican Modern Art, 1949-1968

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Dedication

To my beloved husband and biggest champion of my work, Juan Ruiz-Healy

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Mathias Goeritz: Minister of Change in Mexican Modern Art, 1949-1968

Ana Patricia Núñez-Ruiz, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2017

Supervisor: Héctor Domínguez Ruvalcaba

In 1949, artist Mathias Goeritz (1915-1990) relocated to México from Germany, by way of Spain, with new aesthetic ideas, intellectual capital, and an extraordinary outgoing personality. Four years later Goeritz inaugurated his *Museo Experimental: El eco*, a space which presented "…an art form unknown in México: a modern architecture that motivates feelings or emotions." Goeritz created a hybrid work, an architecture/sculptural space, as a counterpoint to the pragmatism of functionalist architecture, prevailing at the time. The inauguration in México City of the *Museo Experimental: El Eco,* in 1953, revived old controversies between doctrinaire and liberal artists. A block of party-line artists, led by David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974), attacked the German émigré artist Mathias Goeritz as a hedonist and called *El eco* a sinful place. Siqueiros was the most active spokesperson against art that was outside the parameters of the Mexican school of painting, known as Muralism.

Why was Mathias Goeritz's practice so criticized and opposed by the Mexican art establishment? Was it Abstract art that muralists deemed a superficial practice against the national problems? Was it his spiritual and emotional claims about art and architecture? Was it his role as a visual arts teacher? In this dissertation, I seek to answer these questions through an analysis of spirituality in his art and architectural practice, as well as his writings. I also argue that it is through the monumentality of Goeritz's sculptural work that his abstract aesthetic confronts, front and center, the artistic Social Realism dialogue of the era. This study concentrates on the period from Goeritz arrival in Mexico in 1949 and concludes in 1968, coinciding with the Mexico City Summer Olympic games. For this dissertation, spirituality is the exploratory thread. Goeritz's aesthetic principle is based on the conviction that art, beyond what it represents, fulfills a spiritual function. Goeritz's writing about the importance of believing in a higher calling through art creation is unique because it articulates what's behind his art practice. An approximation of what spirituality meant to Goeritz is done by reading and reflecting on his artistic creations, writings in magazines, and manifestos.

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Chapter I: Introduction

In 1949, artist Mathias Goeritz (1915-1990) relocated to México from Germany, by way of Spain, with new aesthetic ideas, intellectual capital, and an extraordinary outgoing personality.[1] Four years later Goeritz inaugurated his *Museo Experimental: el eco,* a space which presented an abstract aesthetic and "…an art form unknown in México: a modern abstract architecture that motivates feelings or emotions."[2] Goeritz created a hybrid work, an architecture/sculptural space, as a counterpoint to the pragmatism of functionalist architecture, prevailing at the time. The inauguration in México City of the *Museo Experimental: el eco* (Figure 1) revived old controversies between doctrinaire and liberal artists.[3] A block of party-line artists, led by David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974), attacked the German émigré artist Mathias Goeritz as a hedonist and called *el eco* a sinful place.[4] In an evident pro-soviet Stalinist discourse, Siqueiros described it as "bourgeois, decadent, individualistic and dangerously foreign."[5] Siqueiros

[1] Jorge Alberto Manrique, "Mathias Goeritz, el provocador," in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y testimonios,* eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), 146.

[2] Alma Ruiz, "Open up: An introduction," in *The Experimental Exercise of Freedom: Lygia Clark, Gego, Mathias Goeritz, Helio Oiticica and Mira Schendel,* eds. Alma Ruiz and Rina Carvajal (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999), 22. I am using lower e for eco to respect the original Goeritz font size design.

[3] Cultural debates will be analyzed later this chapter.

[4] Anita Brenner, "Summer in México," *Art News,* LIII, 4 (June/July/August 1954): 59.

[5] Ibid.

was the most active spokesperson against art that was outside the parameters of the Mexican school of painting, known as Muralism.

Goeritz found himself criticized in 1954, when he received a post to teach at México's Autonomous National University (UNAM), by the two remaining living artists of the trinity of Mexican Muralist giants, Diego Rivera (1886-1957) and David Alfaro Siqueiros. [6] Rivera and Siqueiros wrote in a joint open letter to the president of UNAM that Goeritz was "…a faker without the slightest talent or preparation for being an artist, which he professes to be."[7] Rivera and Siqueiros were still the most influential art voices, managing for instance, State cultural institutions and the press. Rivera and Siqueiros, as well as others, expressed dislike for foreigners, like Goeritz, who did not practice Social Realism.[8] In general terms, Social Realist artists created figurative and realistic images of working people along with scenes of pre-Hispanic history and the Mexican revolution. Besides nationalist concerns, Rivera and Siqueiros opposed Goeritz because of his role as a teacher, who according to art historian James Oles, "threatened to dislodge further the muralist position in official culture."[9] In post-revolutionary México, the promotion of a nationalistic ideology determined the formal narrative of most practicing artists. For

[6] Jose Clemente Orozco was the third and he died in 1949 just weeks before Goeritz arrival in México.

[7] These charges against Goeritz appeared in an open letter to the president of UNAM, published as "Protesta por el cargo dado a Mathias Goeritz," in the México City newspaper *Excélsior* and *El Popular*, 15 June 1954.

[8] The number of foreign artists working in México is large but most of them practiced Surrealism like Leonora Carrington. Remedios Varo et al and Rivera had many affinities with them.

[9] James Oles, *Art and Architecture in México* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013), 326.

Goeritz, the institutionalization of a political message in art and the demand for purely functional architecture were impediments to the transformation of society.

Why was Mathias Goeritz's practice so criticized and opposed by the Mexican art establishment? Was it Abstract art that muralists deemed a superficial practice against the national problems? Was it his spiritual and emotional claims about art and architecture? Was it his role as a visual arts teacher? In this dissertation, I seek to answer these questions through an analysis of spirituality in his art and architectural practice, as well as his writings. I also argue that it is through the monumentality of Goeritz's sculptural work that his abstract aesthetic confronts, front and center, the artistic Social Realism dialogue of the era. Rather than the work of a solitary genius, this development was a project with multiple first steps, and multiple creators. Artists like German Cueto, Carlos Mérida, and Rufino Tamayo played an important role on the development of abstract art in México. Cueto and Mérida had practiced Geometric abstraction but it's through the monumentality of Goeritz work that abstract work breaks through. Goeritz was seen as an invader of both the Mexican art space and the canonical national revolutionary identity as defended by the muralists.

Indeed, referring to Goeritz's work, art scholar Osvaldo Sánchez says, "The dissidence against the Muralist establishment brought to the Mexican artistic milieu a new, demystifying conception of the author and the viewer, of style and the nature of visual experience, of the relationship between architecture and painting, and of religiosity

as a legitimate spiritual basis for a supreme collective aim."[10] *El eco* and other works by Goeritz present a totally different aesthetic, abstract art, to the prevailing one, the work of the muralist or Mexican School. We should remember that artists like Rufino Tamayo paintings had abstract elements but were permeated with pre-Hispanic and figurative elements. The same can be said of Carlos Mérida and other modern artists working at that time in México. Both artists, along with Cueto, worked with Goeritz at *el eco*, and Goeritz wrote about their work extensively and with admiration. The artistic practice of Tamayo and Mérida, among others, represented a transition in the progression towards abstraction in art. After World War II there is a resurgence of abstraction, part of a general tendency in international circles towards individual emphasis, and elimination of recognizable subject matter. Siqueiros even attacked Rufino Tamayo as a French style painter and as not being 'Mexican' enough. Tamayo responded, "As I am an Indian, the Mexican comes to me spontaneously, without having to be looking around."[11] If someone as Mexican as Rufino Tamayo was attacked, the wrath of Siqueiros was even worse with foreigners like Goeritz.

The disconnection between Siqueiros and artists like Tamayo and Goeritz happened because they each had a different aesthetic and not necessarily due to their

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[10] Osvaldo Sánchez, "Mathias Goeritz: The Ministries of Space," in *The Experimental Exercise of Freedom: Lygia Clark, Gego, Mathias Goeritz, Helio Oiticica and Mira Schendel*, eds. Alma Ruiz and Rina Carvajal (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999), 144.

[11] Antonio Rodríguez, "La pintura mexicana está en decadencia, dice Tamayo," in *El Nacional*, México, septiembre 22, 1947.

nationality. But with the drafting of Article 33 of the 1917 Constitution, the Mexican president had the authority to expel any foreigner deemed undesirable or unfit to live in the country. The article states that the President has "the exclusive power to expel any foreigner whose presence is judged undesirable from the national territory, immediately and without the necessity of prior legal action."[12] Between 1911 and 1940, the government used this provision to issue a few more than 1,200 expulsions to foreigners from about forty countries.[13] The well-known deportation case of Italian-American photographer Tina Modotti was in all international artists' minds.[14] The foreign element must have impacted Goeritz's ways of conducting himself, with all his traumas of escaping Nazism and leaving Berlin. Goeritz mentioned many times how faith and hope gave him the inner strength to focus on his work.

SPIRITUALISM IN ART

For this dissertation, spirituality is the exploratory thread. Goeritz's aesthetic principle is based on the conviction that art, beyond what it represents, fulfills a spiritual function. It is a search to restore the spirit of man, a commitment to the salvation of his time and circumstance. Goeritz's writing about the importance of believing in a higher calling through art creation is unique because it articulates what's behind his art practice. An approximation of what spirituality meant to Goeritz is done by reading and reflecting

[12] Diario oficial de la federación, feb. 5. 1917.

[13] Andrew G. Wood and Pablo Yankelevich, "Foreigners Expelled from México," in *The Borderlands*: *An Encyclopedia of Culture and Politics on the U.S.* - México *Divide*, ed. Andrew G. Wood (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008), 101-103.

[14] Deportation occurred in 1930.

on his artistic creations, writings in magazines, and manifestos. His aesthetic explorations of space sought to represent a spiritual infinite, and the end of figuration. These characteristics are present in the works that I explore in this dissertation: *Museo Experimental: el eco*, *Church Interventions*, *Mensajes Series*, *Torres de Satélite*, and *Ruta de la Amistad*. Spiritualism will be the conductive thread, as a vehicle to discuss the social and political context—México's process of modernity, as well as the transition from a narrative-based art exemplified by the Muralist school to an international aesthetic promulgated by modern architecture and artistic practices, like Goeritz's. His experimental ideas, based on German Expressionism, the principles of the Bauhaus and German Dada, found fertile ground in the post-World War II political and economic changes taking place in México.[15] Goeritz's arrival in México coincided with the so called "Mexican Miracle," of economic success rhetoric; this term will be discussed later. The popularity of functional architecture opened a door to an architecture that elicited emotions and not just practicality. Goeritz's abstract aesthetic at *el eco* museum is an example of this type of spaces. It was at *el eco* where emotional architecture was first articulated, through his manifesto, and where abstract art was prominently staged.

Abstract art remains misunderstood by most of the viewing public. Most people, consider it meaningless. Yet around 1910, when groups of artists moved away from representational art toward abstraction, preferring symbolic color to natural color, ideas to direct observation, there was never an outright dismissal of meaning. German

[15] Bauhaus, is the name of the German School of Arts and Crafts founded in 1919 by Walter Gropius.

Expressionism was first described in 1911 as the manifestation of a rebellion against the established artistic forces. By 1912, abstraction was linked with the idea of Expressionism. During World War I, the expressionist absorbed other modernist styles, including French Cubism and Italian Futurism.

Artist and muralist Diego Rivera (1886-1957) lived in Paris from 1911 to 1921, where he became part of the founders' club of Cubism. Rivera painted over 200 cubist landscapes and cityscapes, still life, and portraits, and upon his return to México he incorporated many of these elements in his frescoes: fracturing of traditional forms, multiple points of perspective, and flattening of the picture plane, among others. México also had *Los Estridentistas* (*Stridentist;* 1922-26), a radical aesthetic movement inspired by Cubism and Futurism. This movement was the closest, of all Mexican art movements, to European constructivism and futurism in its emphasis on the urban, the modern, and the industrial. I will talk about the group and especially German Cueto contributions on Chapter II. Because México experienced the just described artistic practices we can venture to state that this is the reason Goeritz work was welcome by some and rejected by many.

The Mexican School of Muralism had run its course after more than thirty years of being the championed aesthetic of the State.[16] The Mexican School consisted of the

[16] The ideology of the Mexican muralist school was forged during the left-revolutionary and nationalistic administrations between 1925 and 1940. Some historians extend the Mexican revolutionary process from 1910 to 1940. Lázaro Cardenas' six-year presidential term (1934-1940) was a regime of state socialism with strong nationalist leanings, which emphasized production and domestic consumption, the empowerment of rural economy, land expropriations, and foreign investors. The presidential administrations, Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946) and Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946-1952), witnessed the country's industrialization, its openness to international markets, and the beginning of profound

encouragement of mural painting, starting in the 1920s, with social and political discourse as part of the State efforts to bring back together the country after the Mexican Revolution. The representation of the pre-Hispanic world, as well as the gains of the Mexican Revolution were immortalized through murals, among another iconography. State sponsored mural production increased significantly beginning in 1940 with the expansion of Mexican industry and urbanization under President Manuel Ávila Camacho. This trend continued until the early 1960s. Historian Esther Acevedo writes, "The increase in sponsorship is due to the government desire to envelop the economic development in a plastic discourse that gave the appearance of keeping alive the revolution and its social postulates."[17] One of the reasons Goeritz's work was so opposed in the mid-fifties was that it represented an affront to Mexican Muralists fighting for their beliefs and to maintain what proved to be their last public commissions.

INTERNATIONALISM

Although Goeritz faced serious opposition upon his arrival in México, he was defended by a group of influential architects and was recognized internationally.[18] A few years after the

changes in urban social behaviors. Goeritz's arrival in México coincided with this openness - to a new architectural aesthetic- of the Alemán Valdés administration.

[17] Esther Acevedo, "Introducción," in *Guía de murales del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México* (Ciudad de México: Universidad Iberoamericana-departamento de Arte/Conafe, 1984), *7.*

[18] The defense to Goeritz for his post at UNAM came through a signed letter, by nineteen of the most well-known architects of the time, addressed to the president of UNAM Nabor Carrillo urging him to not pay attention to Rivera and Siqueiros. The letter is in Goeritz's archive at the Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

completion of *el eco*, the prominent French art critic Michel Seuphor wrote of Goeritz as being, "among the best of all sculptors."[19] The mention of Seuphor's name is important because Goeritz established an international network early in his career. Goeritz nurtured relations and friendships, through mail correspondence, with actors and artists. One example is the artist Ángel Ferrant, from Spain, and art critic Jorge Romero Brest from Argentina, amongst others with whom Goeritz promoted his ideas and projects. A few years later his circle included Herbert Bayer, Frederick Kiesler and Sibyl Moholy-Nagy in New York while Michel Ragon and Michel Seuphor were in Paris. They all championed a belief of a progressive evolution toward abstraction and supported a project of renewal for art in Latin American. Through these complementary networks, Goeritz could communicate his ideas and remain engaged with international art news. Goeritz was very successful in establishing important and influential points of contact between the Americas and Europe at a time when that was not usual. He did this because he believed in establishing artistic relationships and because he could further his own agenda and keep himself relevant.

The international point of reference will be explored on two fronts. One, instigated from Goeritz himself on his quest for global recognition; and the other, initiated as a statewide strategy to promote México as a modern country on the world stage. An example of this government strategy is Goeritz's monumental sculpture, *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* that was used by the Mexican government in international advertising

[19] Michel Seuphor, *The sculpture of this century* (New York: G. Braziller, 1960), 199.

campaigns to promote México as a modern country. Chapter V will delve in these complex issues. [20] I am attracted to spiritualism and internationalism, because I find it intriguing that at the root of Goeritz's work spiritualism is present, as well as an ambitious international agenda of self-promotion. I will explore how the quest for internationalism, began after the brutality and isolation of World War II, when cultural bridges were broken. This period represents the first time in many decades that Paris was not the capital of the art world, and New York was not totally considered as such either. Abstract Expressionism was already being widely exhibited in Europe, as evidenced by the exposition, *The New American Painting*. Organized by the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, it travelled between 1958 and 1959 to museums in Basel, Milan, Madrid, Berlin, Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris and London. As for the reaction afforded to this exhibit when it was shown in England, art critic Lawrence Alloway observed:

> If one looks over the reception of Abstract Expressionism in the early days, it was rejected both by the art world and by the public...In fact, the presence of *New American Painting* at the Tate-Gallery received grudging and ignorant reviews. This art was not the way to solicit good cheer among foreign governments. [21]

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[20] México encountered international opposition on their bid for the México Summer Olympic Games of 1968 because, among other issues, it had a problem as the 'land of mañana.' Examples like the monumental *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* were used to portray a modern and sophisticated country. See, Cuauhtémoc Medina, "Modernity as Resurrection," in *Museum as Hub: Tlatelolco and the Localized Negotiation of Future Imaginaries* (New York: New Museum, 2008).

[21] Lawrence Alloway, "Field Notes: An Interview," in *Abstract Expressionism: The Critical Developments* (Buffalo: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 1987), 130.

As we can read by the opinion of Alloway, Abstract Expressionism took several years to be accepted as a legitimate art movement. Eventually, as we know, the world capital of the arts was transferred from Paris to New York. This passage was institutionally consolidated when American artist Robert Rauschenberg won the Grand Prize at the Venice Biennale in 1964, the most prestigious international award. In the meantime, artists working outside of those two capitals felt compelled to be in the art conversation by expressing themselves through articles in magazines and exhibits abroad. As stated in 1959 by art critic José Gómez Sicre:

> The young artists of America know that international centers of art are being born in their own continents, and they already have as points of reception New York and Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and Lima, México City and Sao Paulo, Caracas and Washington.[22]

This absence enabled Goeritz to pursue his voice and write to his international network about the work that he was creating in México and about the Mexican scene. México City was increasingly a global city, in fact, the international cultural prestige of the muralists and other Mexican artists contributed to this globality. Examining Goeritz's works and detailed notebooks, located at the Instituto Cabañas, allows me to understand the above-mentioned themes – spirituality and internationalism in México – in ways that have not previously been explored.

These two opposing agendas, spirituality and internationalism, were pursued by Goeritz through his writings, interviews, and manifestos. Indeed, Goeritz used his

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[22] José Gómez Sicre, "Editorial Note," *Boletin de Artes Visuales* 5 (Washington, DC, May-December, 1959): 2.

international exhibits in New York and Paris to state his position against, for example, the *New Realists* artists from Paris that were exhibiting in New York City.[23] I am also fascinated by these facets of Goeritz's work because on the surface it sometimes seems a paradox, if not an outright contradiction, that an artist that proclaims and writes about the importance of spiritualism in art is perfectly capable of pursuing his worldly ambition with the kind of uncompromising zeal that we observe in the career of Mathias Goeritz. A religious zeal, like the one that he embodied, seems such a contradiction to his ambitious international recognition agenda. Yet, when I discussed this matter with art historian and Goeritz's last wife, Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, she offered that, "…it was the only way for Goeritz to get new art commissions. As a foreigner, he needed to legitimize his work constantly to stay relevant." [24] Art critic Osvaldo Sanchez talks at length of …" certain ostracism that artists like Mathias Goeritz, Leonora Carrington, Wolfgang Paalen, the Horna's and Remedios Varo experienced and lived hounded by the jealousy of a mediocre nationalism established by the Muralists and blessed by a demagogic State."[25] Both Rodríguez Prampolini and Osvaldo Sánchez's comments point to the difficulty of navigating when your artistic aesthetic is totally different plus the encounter of nationalism issues.

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[23] Mathias Goeritz, Please Stop! Manifesto written in English and Manifiesto *"L'art priere contre l'art-merde"* (El arte plegaria contra el arte mierda), París, May 1960 CENIDIAP-INBA Archive. Fondo Mathias Goeritz.

[24] Interview with Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, September 2016.

[25] Osvaldo Sánchez, "Mathias Goeritz: The Ministries of Space," in *The Experimental Exercise of Freedom: Lygia Clark, Gego, Mathias Goeritz, Helio Oiticica and Mira Schendel*, eds. Alma Ruiz and Rina Carvajal (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999), 144.

ABSTRACT ART AND SPIRITUALISM IN ART

The architectural/sculptural space at *el eco*, emphasized non-figurative art or the more common term abstract art.[26] This movement in art is understood as total abandon of the depiction of matter, and wholly devoid of any reference to the natural world. It's the art representation where there is not recognizable subject matter. For the founders of Abstract art, like Wassily Kandinsky and Kazimir Malevich, and for Goeritz, spiritualism was a superior platform, and art became their principal way of achieving it. Goeritz found in abstract art, the most appropriate space for exploring spiritualism. Spiritualism in art was not new to Goeritz's time, and was the focus in the artistic practice of the founders of abstract art. According to scholars, the fathers of abstract art are: Kazimir Malevich, Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian and Frantisek Kupta. They, and a few others, founded the movement around 1911. Art critic Hilton Kramer elaborates, "In their different ways, these four artists were deeply immersed in spiritualist, anti-materialist doctrines, which served to inspire and assist their hard-won efforts to eliminate from their art the kind of pictorial representation of earthly life that, in their eyes, had come to signify a materialism they feared and despised."[27] What differentiates Goeritz work from the just mentioned abstract artists is that each of them were painters. On the other hand, Goeritz's innovative practice is in his contributions to architecture and urban sculpture. These

[26] There are been several names to refer to abstract art throughout art history: Pure painting, objectless painting, Suprematism, Constructivism, Synchronism and so forth.

[27] Hilton Kramer, "On the "Spiritual in Art" in Los Angeles," *The New Criterion*, Vol. 5 Number 8 (April 1987): 1.

contributions are present on the design of *el eco* space and later at *Torres de Ciudad Satélite,* creations that are fully explained in chapters II and IV respectively.

Historically, intellectuals and artists have pointed to nature as evidence of God's presence, however Goeritz and Abstract art founders, saw this differently. One of the perspectives that influenced Goeritz aesthetic was the writing of artist and art theorist Wassily Kandinsky. Goeritz's spiritual philosophy came from the incorporation of ideas that had been evolving from his German Expressionist heritage and more specifically through the writings of Kandinsky. In *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, Kandinsky states, "The spiritual life, to which art belongs and of which she is one of the mightiest elements, is a complicated but definite and easily definable movement forwards and upwards. This movement is the movement of experience. It may take different forms, but it holds at bottom to the same inner thought and purpose."[28] The word experience that Kandinsky mentions is what Goeritz would call emotion when entering a special space like a gothic cathedral. Goeritz also had an admiration for the German branch of Dada.[29] Goeritz was specifically close to the philosophy of one of the founders of Dada, Hugo Ball, from whom he learned the need for spiritual redemption through art. His personal experiences in Europe during the war made him a believer of an art practice that elicits emotion and

[28] Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, trans. and with an introduction by Michael T.H. Sadler (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977), 17.

[29] Dada, Zurich/Berlin, 1916, was the first conceptual art movement where the focus of the artists was not on crafting aesthetically pleasing objects but on making works that often went against bourgeois sensibilities and that generated difficult questions about society, the role of the artist, and the purpose of art.

the importance of spiritualism in art. In México, Goeritz translated these insights and developed a special artistic exercise.

It is in Spain where, according to Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, Goeritz came in touch with Catholicism, "Goeritz was very taken by the pageantry and devotion that he encountered in religious festivals in Granada."[30] Goeritz found in religion a way to fill a void in faith after the atrocities, darkness and calamities of World War II. His commitment to the principle that art could be a conduit for spiritual experience diverged from the Muralists' atheist approach. In 1948 Diego Rivera got himself in a big controversy by depicting Mexican writer *Ignacio Ramirez* holding a sign which reads, "God does not exist" in his mural *Dreams of a Sunday in the Alameda*. The work created a controversy in México, a devout catholic country, and was not shown for nine years until Rivera finally agreed to remove the inscription. "To affirm 'God does not exist', I do not have to hide behind Don Ignacio Ramírez; I am an atheist and I consider religions to be a form of collective neurosis."[31] Siqueiros was a devote communist and atheist as well. Siqueiros painted some works with the figure of Christ, but it was about the hypocrisy of Christianity. [32] Goeritz, on the other hand, belonged to the generation of European artists, like Lucio Fontana (1899-1968), and Ángel Ferrant (1891-1961), who found in faith an antidote to the moral crisis instigated by the traumas of World War II.

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[30] Conversation with Ida Rodríguez Prampolini in Veracruz, México, September 25th, 2016.

[31] Philip Stein, *Siqueiros: His Life and Works* (New York: International Publishers Co, 1994), 176.

[32] Ibid. 339.

Spiritual emotion was the main principle in his work. His aim was to construct an environment of visual experience permeated with religiosity as a legitimate spiritual basis for a supreme collective aim. Goeritz's religion and spiritualism is further address in chapter III.

Goeritz started practicing Abstract art, with a German expressionist vein, while living in Spain in the 1940s. Abstract art is one of the most significant practices of the Latin American avant-garde dating back to the late 1940s.[33] The practice did not really make many inroads in México, due to the Muralist hold in the artistic State production, until Goeritz championed it around 1950. We should remember that México is the only country in Latin America that had a revolution at the beginning of the twentieth century (1910-1917), and kept Social Realism as the foremost artistic expression for a long time.[34] This revolution was given its public image by the Muralist art movement; therefore, the national and official status of this art made the introduction of abstraction very difficult in México. Art historian Rita Eder in her book *Gironella,* mentions that it is not until 1965 that State institutions recognized abstract art in painting by giving Fernando García Ponce and Lilia Carrillo first prizes for their respective abstract works.[35] The muralists furthered the conception of art as a public enterprise at the service of the

[33] Among different historical art movements are the ones defined as the Madí Group (1940s), Perspectivism (late 1940s), Optical and Kinetic art (1950s-1970s) and Concrete and Neo-Concrete art (1960s-1970s), among others.

[34] Cuba was the second, much later than México's, from 1953-59.

[35] Rita Eder, *Gironella* (México City: UNAM, 1981), 24.

government.[36] Goeritz's work, on the other hand, was mostly through private commissions, except for his intervention as artistic coordinator for the México Olympic Games monumental sculpture project, *Ruta de la Amistad* and his commissioned mural at the anthropology museum.

MÉXICO: REVOLUTION, MURALISM, AND ARCHITECTURE

In the 30 years following the revolution of 1910-17, a staggering number of buildings were constructed in México, including single-family homes, apartment complexes, government agencies, hospitals, movie theaters, and schools.[37] The new Constitution of 1917 included resolutions concerning the universal right to a state education, healthcare, and affordable housing. There was a pressing need for a physical infrastructure to support the new regime, implement its health and education programs, and to house the increasingly urbanized workforce. The revolutionary government also needed new ministerial buildings to administer these programs.

By far, the most active agency was the Ministry of Education because it oversaw architectural and artistic education. The push for no-charge schooling was at the top of the revolutionaries' agenda in a country with a 72 percent illiteracy rate in 1921.[38] The goal of expanding educational opportunities required the construction of hundreds of schools throughout the country. The first post-revolutionary Minister of Education was

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[36] Octavio Paz, *Essays on Mexican Art* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993), 147.

[37] See I. E. Myers, *México's Modern Architecture* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing, 1952).

[38] Jean Meyer, "Revolution and Reconstruction in the 1920s," in *México since Independence,* ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge UP**,** 1991), 125-200, 208.

José Vasconcelos (1920-24), who had spent many years in exile in the United States. He was a traditionalist with a taste for *Neo-Colonial* art and architecture, and a staunch critic of all things American (USA) or modern:

> México had a university before Boston, and libraries, museums, newspapers and a theater before New York and Philadelphia. To build is the duty of each era, and buildings shall be the glory of the new government...We did not want schools of the Swiss type... or schools of the Chicago type [a veiled reference to Modernism] ...In architecture, too, we should find inspiration in our glorious past.[39]

Early on, Vasconcelos made a significant decision to sponsor muralists Diego Rivera, who he brought back from Europe, and José Clemente Orozco, among others, to use public façades to glorify México's history, especially its pre-Hispanic one, the Revolution, and the regime's educational policies. This move had several important effects.

First, it helped highlight the need to find and incorporate the local dimensions of art and architecture. In 1923, the Manifesto of the Union of Workers, Technicians, Painters, and Sculptors proclaimed that:

> …the popular art of México is the most important and the healthiest of spiritual manifestations and its native tradition the best of all traditions... We proclaim that all forms of aesthetic expression which are foreign or contrary to popular feeling are bourgeois and should be eliminated.[40]

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[39] Quoted in Antonio Méndez-Vigata, *Modernity and the Architecture of México,* ed. Edward R. Burian (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1997), 66-67.

[40] Quoted in Jean Meyer, "Revolution and Reconstruction in the 1920s," *México since Independence,* ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge UP**,** 1991), 209.

Second, the privileged treatment given to the muralists imposed certain constraints on architects regarding government buildings, especially the requirement to build vast wall surfaces in cement and not glass, and the added emphasis on ornamentation. We should remember that muralism was sponsored by the State.

Perhaps the most important effect of the State's sponsorship of the muralists was the architectural tastes they came to advocate. Diego Rivera, while an admirer of colonial buildings, did not agree with Vasconcelos' promotion of *Neo-Colonial* architecture; Rivera displayed an interest in the functional aspects of modernist architecture. Moreover, as director of the Central School of Plastic Arts in 1929-30, Rivera diligently pushed to introduce reforms, presenting architecture as a useful social endeavor geared towards the design of utilitarian buildings. This utilitarian and functional aspects of architecture were important on the early part of reconstruction of the country. After all the Revolution's destruction, there was a tremendous need for school and hospital construction. Additionally, after a few decades, there was prerequisite for modernization with a human connection quality, like the one promulgated by Goeritz, Barragán, Sordo Madaleno and several other architects. While the new regime promoted a modernist style with a certain touch of indigenous sensitivity to turn México into one of the "progressive" countries of the world, many architects still subscribed to the more traditional *Neo-Colonial* style.[41]

[41]Antonio Méndez-Vigata, "Politics and Architectural Language," in *Modernity and the Architecture of México*, ed. Edward R. Burian (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1997), 61.

The *Neo-Colonial* language was overtly nationalistic and portrayed an "authentic" national identity in opposition to foreign influences. Vasconcelos valued *Neo-Colonial*, as an expression of architectural syncretism, given that the Spanish architecture of the colonizer was transformed by the introduction of pre-Hispanic forms, references, and characteristics by the largely indigenous populations that built it. For instance, the traditional stone, *texontle*, was used for many of the architectural details.

The *International Modern* was thought to project the modernism of the post-Revolutionary government and the hope of a new future where México would be included among the most progressive nations in the world. It also aspired to a future where machines, technologies and modernity itself would bring progress to the masses. Modern forms, after all, represented a rejection of traditional—considered bourgeois—architecture in favor of a modern, public architecture.

Lastly, the *Mexican Modern* adopted the language of *Formalism* and the so-called *International Modern*, adding Mexican vernacular elements to create a distinct architecture that adapted to Mexican realities. The best example of *Mexican Modern* is the work of Luis Barragán, who championed vernacular and *International Modern* elements. [42] At the new development in México City known as *El Pedregal*, elements of both styles were absorbed into new vocabularies of glass, concrete, and local stone, roughly textured cubic masses, brilliant colors, and references to local culture and landscape. Barragán's use of adobe, stucco, cobblestones, and unfinished wood,

[42] Barragán won the *Pritzker Prize*, the most prestigious architecture award, in 1980.

glamorized the style and made it iconic even today. He said, "It has been a mistake to abandon the shelter of walls for the inclemency of large areas of glass."[43] Goeritz met Barragán as soon as he arrived in México in 1949. Barragán was very taken by the fact that Goeritz had spent several years in North Africa, a place long admired by him.[44] Barragán immediately invited Goeritz to collaborate with him on several projects.

The *Mexican Modernists*, shared their European counterparts' belief in social progress through good design. Mexican architects, however, did not merely imitate European developments. They actively sought to incorporate local influences which, in some cases, led to the supplementation of key modernist principles. Even Juan O'Gorman eventually joined this trend of *Mexicanization.* After designing purely Functionalist buildings and extolling the virtues of efficient methods and industrial prefabrication during most of the 1930s, retiring from architecture and dedicated mainly to painting, O'Gorman returned to design in the mid-1940s. He embraced a view of an architecture firmly rooted in its surroundings, with abundant vernacular elements, especially in the coloring and ornamentation (murals, reliefs, sculptures) of the façade, as in the library at the National Autonomous University of México built between 1950 and 1952. This work represents a more successful attempt to integrate art and architecture with a specific site. With his background in architecture and his years as a practicing artist, O'Gorman

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[43] Barragán, quoted in Clive Smith Bamford, *Builders in the Sun: Five Mexican Architects* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co. Inc, 1967), 54.

[44] Keith L. Eggener, "Expressionism and Emotional Architecture in México: Luis Barragán's Collaborations with Max Cetto and Mathias Goeritz," *Journal of the History of Architecture* (January 1995): 87.

created an effective artistic integration. His incorporation of local stone mosaics and a composition of historical and cosmological symbols have made this building iconic.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Danzig, an international city/state, in 1915, Werner Mathias Goeritz Brunner was the son of Ernst Goeritz, the son of a Jew and a protestant on his mother side.[45] Ernst Goeritz was an attorney who had been mayor of Danzig, a man of liberal education. Mathias mother was Hedwig Brunner, a Protestant and the daughter of an academic painter. When Goeritz was a few months old, his family moved to Berlin where he grew up and where his father died in 1931. He studied painting at the *Kunstgewerbeschule*, an arts and crafts school in Berlin-Charlottenburg, and studied art history, earning his doctorate at Friedrich-Wilhelms University in 1942.[46] Goeritz was working as an art historian at the National Gallery in Berlin, while waiting for a visa to leave the country. In a conversation with Monteforte Toledo, he mentioned that he was probably allowed to leave because he had a Danzigian passport and a non-Jewish mother. [47] But according to the published doctoral dissertation of Chus Tudelilla, Goeritz could leave Germany because he got a job at the German Consulate in Morocco in 1941, where

[45] The international city of Danzig, where Mathias was born, was a semi-autonomous city state from 1919 to 1939.

[46] Thesis work on 19th-century Saxon painter, Ferdinand von Rayski.

[47] Mario Monteforte Toledo, *Conversaciones con Mathias Goeritz* (Ciudad de México: Siglo XXI, 1993), 79.

he served as representative of the German Institute of Culture in Tetuan. [48] He was assigned to work as a professor of German in Tanger, Tetuan (capital of Spanish protectorate of Morocco), Malaga, and Granada. Throughout Goeritz's life, we see episodes, during important times, were he comes through as a survivor. However, he was more of a strategist than a survivor; he endured WWII, and in 1949 landed in México, where he could flourish and established an artistic practice.

SCHOLARSHIP

In the last few years, scholarship on Mathias Goeritz has expanded, but his artistic endeavors, such as his interventions in colonial churches, have been barely researched by Spanish-speaking art historians and almost not at all by English-speaking specialists. I consider this work, using spiritualism as exploratory thread, a contribution to this scholarship. Another contribution is the international network of Goeritz as well as the appropriation of the image of his work by the State eager for modern metaphors.

Goeritz historiography can be included in three groups. In the first group, there are the compilation catalogs of Goeritz's work, from various museum exhibits. These catalogues are an excellent reference source for images and essays that compose them.

[48] Chus Tudelilla Laguardia, *Mathias Goeritz. Recuerdos de España, 1940-1953* (Zaragoza: Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2014), 29.

that is the case of the exhibition in the Antiguo Colegio de San Idelfonso,[49] or the more recently show organized by the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid.[50]

A second group brings together the biographical or general orientation books that introduce the reader to the life and work of Goeritz. In this section, the works of Federico Moráis,[51] Lily Kassner[52] and Laura Ibarra, [53]are the more relevant. They present, in general, the visual work of Mathias Goeritz, and in the case of Kassner, the context in which it was created. This dissertation work goes beyond what has been done by incorporating and discussing the artist's writings to his oeuvre.

The third group is composed of the most specialized historiographical works, which deal with specific themes or elements of Goeritz's production: influence of the work of Mathias Goeritz in Spanish art, [54] his contributions in the field of teaching in the

[49] *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz. Catálogo de la exposición* and *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y testimonios,* eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997).

[50] *Mathias Goeritz: El regreso de la serpiente y la invención de la arquitectura emocional,* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C. y Fundación Amparo, 2014).

[51] Federico Moráis, *Mathias Goeritz* (Ciudad de México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982).

[52] Lily Kassner, *Mathias Goeritz, una biografía 1915-1990* (Ciudad de México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las artes/ Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1998).

[53] Laura Ibarra, *Mathias Goeritz. Ecos y laberintos* (Ciudad de México: Artes de México y el mundo/ Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2014).

[54] Chus Tudelilla Laguardia, *Mathias Goeritz. Recuerdos de España 1940-1953* (Zaragoza: Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, Col. de Arte, 2014).

school of Architecture in Jalisco,[55] and Goeritz's aesthetic thinking.[56] Daniel Garza Usabiaga's dissertation and subsequent 2012 book: *Mathias Goeritz y la arquitectura emocional. Una revision crítica (1952-1968),* does not include Goeritz's work in churches and does not provide enough emphasis of the spiritual ramifications of his work. Garza Usabiaga has brought an important contribution about Goeritz's work, especially regarding *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* and the influence on modernist architecture in México by Goeritz's emotional architecture. Jennifer Josten, who wrote the only monograph in English, which is now in a manuscript stage, *Mathias Goeritz: Modernist Art and Architecture in Cold War México,* concentrates on Goeritz's work and its international ramifications. Francisco Reyes Palma deserves a special mention. Reyes Palma has concentrated on writing about Goeritz's *Mensajes Series* and *Los Hartos*. He has also placed the importance of Goeritz's work in the dissolution of the Mexican School and organized the international exhibit of Goeritz at the Reina Sofia museum in Madrid that travelled to México in 2014 and 2015. A limited discussion of spirituality does appear in some studies of *el eco* through readings of his *Manifiesto de Arquitectura Emocional* and *Mensajes series.*

To communicate the significance of spirituality and its connections to internationalism, I am drawing mainly upon the two rich resources of the Mathias Goeritz

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[55] Fernando González Cortázar, *Mathias Goeritz en Guadalajara* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, Col. Fundamentos, serie Arquitectura, 1991); *La fundación de un sueño: La Escuela de Arquitectura de Guadalajara,* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, Col. Fundamentos, serie Arquitectura, 1995).

[56] Leonor Cuahonte Rodríguez (compiladora) *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz* (Ciudad de México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/ Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2007).

archives in México: one in México City, at the Fondo Mathias Goeritz, Archivo Cenidiap/INBA, and the other in Guadalajara. This last one is larger, a more complete archive, and is located at the Instituto Cultural Cabañas in Guadalajara. This archive has, for example, the card that Goeritz received from his brother, who served for the German army during World War II, shortly before dying on the front; letters from his German neighbors describing the state of his home after the war; as well as generous correspondence that he had with the most well-known Mexican architects and international intelligentsia. Most importantly, it contains several calendar notebooks in which Goeritz, with a German precision, annotated his activities of each day. From these sources, this dissertation collects a constellation of materials valuable to argue in favor of the emphasis of this work, mainly the spiritual function of art.

I reviewed, at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, the archives of Ricardo de Robina, the architect that worked the most with Goeritz in Church interventions. I was disappointed by the archive contents, since they do not include relevant information to this study. On the other hand, the archive of Alfred Schmela, the influential mid-twentieth century German art dealer, was a delightful surprise. This archive is rich in resources for understanding Goeritz international networking. It contains correspondence, from and to Goeritz, regarding articles on the magazine *Arquitectura/México*. The magazine provided Goeritz a way to insert himself on international art conversations.[57]

[57] The Benson Library at the University of Texas, Austin has also provided me with important material specifically from articles in newspapers of that period. The Frick art reference library in New York City, contains the documentation of Goeritz's first solo show in New York, at the Carstairs Gallery in 1956, as well as two valuable files with documentation from MoMA and given to the Frick in 1990; it also holds an artist file of Goeritz's several works.

FROM SPAIN TO GUADALAJARA

Upon his arrival in Spain in 1945, according to Mexican author and art critic Rita Eder, Goeritz, "began his career in art with an introduction to drawing, watercolor, painting and book illustration."[58] During his years as a student in Berlin, he took classes with notable artists: etching and lithography with Käthe Kollwitz; painting with Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, and sculpture with carver and engraver Ernst Barlach. It is in Madrid that Goeritz established his first intellectual international network with the help of sculptor Ángel Ferrant.[59] This type of network sets in motion a practice that Goeritz will continue until the end of his life. It is also in Spain where Goeritz came into physical contact with contemporary art as a vehicle of a higher calling.[60] While Goeritz was familiar with artists like Paul Klee and German expressionists groups like *Die Brucke*, it is in Spain through the mentoring of Ángel Ferrant that Goeritz encountered and valued the importance of spiritual values in the practice of art. A letter that Ferrant writes to Argentinian art critic and intellectual Romero Brest tells about this meeting with Goeritz in Madrid in 1947. He talks highly about Goeritz and how both shared the same view on faith as a force that "signifies penetration in the past through the present and facing the future."[61] Goeritz always acknowledged Ferrant as his teacher in sculpture and the

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[58] Rita Eder, "MaGo: visión y memoria," in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y testimonios*, eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), 40-41.

[59] Sebastian Gasch, Jorge Romero Brest, and Eduardo Westerdhal, among others.

[60] Goeritz had only read about the importance of spiritual concept but it was in Spain were the notion came alive.

inspiration for his many artistic projects in México. Moreover, Ferrant introduced Goeritz to different contemporary groups, such as *Dau al Set* [62] in Barcelona. Ferrant was an avant-garde artist who did not leave Spain during Franco times for many reasons. He found in Goeritz the energy and capacity to initiate projects like the book publishing of new artists' work, exhibitions of artists like Henry Moore in Spain for the first time, and many other artistic activities. After living in Morocco, Malaga, and Granada, Goeritz, no longer working for the German government, briefly lived in Madrid in 1947. He then moved to Santillana del Mar.[63]

In Santillana del Mar, and under the impact of the discovery of the Altamira Caves, Goeritz founded the School of Altamira,[64] his first utopian project, later known as "a traveling art school with abstract tendencies." [65] Etymologically, "utopia" means "nowhere;" a second meaning is that of an "ideally perfect place, especially in its social, political, and moral aspects, or in a work of fiction describing one." A third is that "of a chimera, an impossible or absurd fantasy." Goeritz's projects, at Santillana del Mar and

[61] Quoted on Chus Tudelilla Laguardia, *Mathias Goeritz: Recuerdos de España, 1940-1953* (Zaragoza: Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2014), 57.

[62] Members included Antoni Tapies, Joan Ponc and Modesto Cuixart among others.

[63] He briefly also lived in Zaragoza, Barcelona and Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

[64] The Escuela de Altamira was a loose association of artists inspired by the example of the cave paintings of Altamira and the work of artists such as Joan Miró and Paul Klee. It organized the Primera Semana de Arte Moderno (First week of Modern Art) in Santillana del Mar and produced a publication entitled *Los nuevos prehistóricos*. See Hilda Urrechaga Hernández, "Mathias Goeritz, promotor de la renovación artística en España: La Escuela de Altamira," in *Los Ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y Testimonios,* eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), *46-55*.

[65] Ibid.

later at the *Museo Experimental: el eco*, were imbued by the two last meanings of utopia. His dream of creating a school where all artists are free to create came to fruition at Santillana and then at *el eco*, where all artists could express themselves in other disciplines. Both projects were very short lived, but they remain referents even 60 years after closing. At the Escuela de Altamira, artistic freedom and non-ideological art were vital conceptions, ideas that would later resonate in Goeritz's work.[66]

It was also in Spain that his ideas matured and where he began to use a visual language close to abstract art with a sophisticated visual synthesis (Figure 2). The encounter with the cave paintings of Altamira taught him the importance of anonymous art as a service to the community. Between the teachings of Ángel Ferrant, his readings, and his encounter with Altamira, Goeritz was propelled to develop his emotional and spiritual approach to art.

On the recommendation of Goeritz's Mexican students in the School of Altamira, Alejandro Rangel Hidalgo and Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, [67] the director of the School of Architecture Ignacio Díaz Morales, invited Goeritz to become a professor to the newly founded School of Architecture at the University of Guadalajara (Jalisco). The general director of the university, Jorge Matute Remus, aimed to incorporate European professionals. At this university, Goeritz created a design workshop in which he

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[66] Chus Tudelilla Laguardia, *Mathias Goeritz. Recuerdos de España, 1940-1953* (Zaragoza: Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2014), 151.

[67] Ida Rodríguez became Goeritz's wife many years later.

disseminated the teachings of the Bauhaus. Goeritz, then a young artist just over 30 years old, was a multifaceted artist whose image as a creator was emerging.

GUADALAJARA, 1949-1953

In the fall of 1949, Goeritz was named chair of art history at the new architecture school. Armed with energy, an international intellectual network, and a PhD in Art History, he could inspire the first generation of Guadalajara architects with his visual education classes and the human, and emotional elements that he emphasized. Architecture in México was where the latest modern techniques underwent experimentation and where Goeritz created his network of supporters. His Mexican network started with Luis Barragán (1902-1988), was fostered with architect Ricardo de Robina, and was reinforced with architect Mario Pani (1911-1993), the trusted architect of President Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946-1952).[68] Years later he worked closely with architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez for México Summer Olympic Games of 1968.[69]

One of the missions of the president of the University of Guadalajara, Jorge Matute Remus, was to hire European professors as faculty of the new school of architecture. To that end, the director of the School of Architecture, Ignacio Díaz Morales, was sent to Europe to interview potential candidates. Goeritz arrived in Guadalajara on October 11, 1949. On his way there, he and Marianne visited the port of Veracruz (where they disembarked and were greeted by Rodríguez Prampolini) and in

[68] Goeritz also collaborated with architect Juan Sordo Madaleno, amongst other architects.

[69] Goeritz also worked closely with Ricardo Legorreta, as an artistic creator, collaborator and consultant for the Camino Real Hotel and other private commissions.

México City (where he met Luis Barragán, Jesus "Chucho" Reyes Ferreira, Justino Fernández and Díaz Morales).[70] In 1984, Goeritz reported:

> ... when I arrived in 1949, México was at its peak, was changing from being an underdeveloped country to a developing country, there was a remarkable pace of construction in México City, major road works and shortly after my arrival, the construction of the university campus, which marked a high point for Mexican architecture. All these constructions left everybody with their mouths open.[71]

The artist continued, "Later came the architectural works from Brazil or Venezuela, but the beginning was in México."[72] Goeritz's energy and creativity were also fostered by the moment of high optimism and the desire to modernize México and several Latin American countries. World War II made a profound impact on the Mexican economy with its accompanying turn toward private-sector dominance in the social allocation of resources. Exports boomed in response to U.S. preparations for war, as did capital inflows and *bracero* remittances. [73] However, by the end of the war, internal rather than external demand had become the main engine driving the national economy. By the 1950s, previous infrastructural investments began to pay off, and the conditions of the "Mexican Miracle" were laid as 95 percent or more of domestic demand was met

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[70] On the details of the Goeritz's arrival, see entries for October second to fourth in his 1949 agenda, held in the colección Mathias Goeritz of the Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

[71] Interview of Mathias Goeritz by Humberto Ricalde, *Traza* 6 (January-February 1984).

[72] Ibid.

[73] Named for the Spanish term *bracero*, meaning "manual laborer," was a series of laws and diplomatic agreements, between the United States and México, for the importation of temporary contract laborers from México to the United States. The program years are from 1942 to 1964.

internally rather than through manufactured imports. [74] Despite external shocks affecting price levels and the balance of payments, protectionist policies provided the political floor for continued economic dynamism.

The invitation from the University of Guadalajara was for Goeritz to serve as the Art History chair and teach a class by the same name. A few months later, the class title was changed to History of Architecture I. The other class he taught was something new in the Mexican academia world—Visual Education; both subjects would be taught in the School of Architecture.[75] School of Architecture director Díaz Morales intended to make this school a hotbed of young talent, which would much later give the city a different face with new urban planning and architectural work.

VISUAL EDUCATION

Inspired by the ideas of the German Bauhaus School of Arts and Crafts regarding the integration of the arts, as well as their theoretical and reflective elements, the proposed curriculum in the School of Architecture at the University of Guadalajara introduced significant innovations. As its name implies, the chair of Visual Education was intended to generate training regarding visual content, working with forms, materials and proportions reflecting on their spatial context and purposes. It aimed to explore the

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[74] The "Mexican Miracle" refers to the country's inward-looking development strategy that produced sustained economic growth of 3 to 4 percent and modest 3 percent inflation annually from the 1940s until the 1970s. I will elaborate on "Desarrollo Estabilizador," (Stabilizer Development) on chapter III.

[75] Letter signed by Jorge Matute y Remus, Mathias Goeritz archive at Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara, México.

possibilities of design, thereby stimulating the senses and therefore emotions.[76] Based on this experiment, Goeritz believed that a human element was to be found in the work of his students, beyond the mere placement of forms and figures. This interest by Goeritz may be related to the ethical precepts of the Bauhaus, a school admired by the artist since his youth. Like the Bauhaus professors, Goeritz sought to recreate the spirit of the student body and therefore started from concepts like freedom, beauty or pain for the development of work. This meant not only an innovative proposal in the School of Architecture, but in the way, we understand the teaching of architecture in México, which was alien to a conceptualization of the work based on human subjectivity. Due to the characteristics of the class, the close relationship between professor and student (architecture schools at the time did not have as many students as now) and the promising outlook of a school itself, Goeritz, came to consider the Guadalajara Architecture School as a Mexican Bauhaus.[77] For his class, Goeritz modeled his work on the pedagogy of László Moholy-Nagy. However, the emphasis on the importance of spirituality is linked to the teachings of Johannes Itten,[78] who fought for a spiritual training of the student. As Itten writes, "When heart and hand are one during the designing of a form, this form becomes the bearer of intellectual spiritual content. When we can relive this content from

[76] Recall that in 1953 Goeritz wrote and published his manifesto of emotional architecture in 1954 in the Journal of Architecture in Guadalajara.

[77] Letter from Mathias Goeritz to Jorge Romero Brest, written on December 7, 1949 Jrb Archives (FFyL - UBA), correspondence, 369. Andrea Giunta, "Correspondencia entre Mathias Goeritz and Jorge Romero Brest," in *Los Ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y Testimonios*, eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), 212.

[78] Luis Porter Galetar, "La pedagogía de Mathias Goeritz," in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz…,* 74.

the form, we discover the effect of a work of art"[79] The main goal was to encourage a sensitivity among the students that would allow that the material and the spiritual are one and the same thing.

Diaz Morales was interested in resuming the teachings of Josef Albers at the Bauhaus, which deposited a large part of the work in the emerging creativity of each student and, therefore, a course like Visual Education hoped that it would help awaken the creative spirit of the students. [80] In 1961, Goeritz reflected on the bases and purposes of Visual Education, taking as its starting point, postulates of the Bauhaus with the purpose of strengthening in the student their artistic sensitivity:

> Despite a series of efforts, among which *art nouveau*, *De Stijl* or the *Bauhaus*, most artists have not wanted to subordinate their art to architecture. They continue to create, with rigorous independence, that reach the public through galleries - to private or public collections, without the concern of doing a service which, in old times, was inseparable from the work of art. Therefore, the art has become not only an art of minorities but, in the opinion of some critics, a minor art. Faced with this state of affairs and beside the isolated efforts of painters or sculptors, the architects have endeavored to follow the example of the Bauhaus by introducing chairs of elementary experimentation to confront students to the modern visual world, to create an aesthetically and spiritually higher environment in their constructions. Although the works that result from these courses, can reach the artistic level of those works presented in galleries, have not been prepared with the intention to be art. It

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[79] Johannes Itten, *Design and Form: The Basic Course at the Bauhaus and Later* (New York: Reinhold Pub. Corp., 1964), 148.

[80] Ignacio Díaz Morales, *Mathias Goeritz en Guadalajara: Conversaciones con Fernando González Cortázar* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1991), 39.

> is simply a search for visual or tactile values to enrich the formal world of the student.[81]

It was important to Goeritz, that among these disciplines, architecture, sculpture and design, an intimate dialogue be established with the creative process, a task that was part of his pedagogy. The search for an artistic sensitivity on the part of his students constituted for Goeritz a fundamental element to reach a sense of modernity in the field of architecture, because from his personal perspective, the architect should visualize his constructive work as a work that combines various techniques and materials, hence the importance of developing an aesthetic:

> The basis of any design education is precisely, and undoubtedly, that training that in México has been given the name of Visual Education, Plastic Education or simply design. This education covers all branches, from theories based on the philosophy and history of aesthetics, to the practice of using the most diverse materials and their technical application.
> There is no book in México that serves as a guide, both for teachers and for students in this area, despite the efforts made in a seminar of the National School of Architecture (UNAM) for this purpose. The only books that have been used so far are those of Moholy-Nagy and Kepes, edited in English.
> The objective of the Visual Education class is the formation and extension of the vision of student based on experiences that develop his spontaneous inventiveness to make him an imaginative observer, it is a question of discovering the means of expression that are appropriate to intellectual and motivational possibilities, which, once put into action, should give sincere appreciation of his creative power.[82]

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[81] Mathias Goeritz, "La educación Visual," *Gaceta del Fondo de Cultura Económica,* Año VIII, núm. 86. octubre de 1961, in Leonor Cuahonte (compiladora), *El Eco de Mathias Goeritz* …,70.

[82] Mathias Goeritz, "La educación Visual" in Leonor Cuahonte (comp.), *El Eco de Mathias Goeritz*…, 71-72.

Goeritz was an early proponent of collaborative experimentation and participatory practices, a pioneer in this field. His pedagogy practice positively impacted many students. As art historian Osvaldo Sanchez says, "With his course on Visual Education, Goeritz promulgated a more complex network of relationships among architecture, design, painting, sculpture, and drawing which surpassed the Muralists' demagogic use of the wall support."[83] The experimental choice championed by Goeritz, an aesthetic reflection linked to the freedom of creation, led him to established interdisciplinary spaces, where students of different schools could study subjects related to these workshops.

Over the three years he lived in Guadalajara, Goeritz founded four art galleries. In one of them, *Camarauz*, he exhibited his individual work twice. He also printed art editions, wrote articles, gave lectures and began wood sculpting. In the art gallery *Arquitac* (Figure 3), he promoted exhibitions under the slogan *Art without borders*, where, for the first time in México, works by Henry Moore, Paul Klee and Arshile Gorky were shown.[84] Exhibiting the work of such artists in Guadalajara, says Cristóbal Andrés Jácome Moreno, was "a moment in which the regional culture could be compared to that in the capital, and even a step further."[85] However, despite the significant number of

[83] Osvaldo Sanchez, "Mathias Goeritz: The Ministries of Space," in *The Experimental Exercise of Freedom: Lygia Clark, Gego, Mathias Goeritz, Hélio Oiticica and Mira Schendel* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999), 147.

[84] Frederico Morais, 25.

[85] Cristóbal Andrés Jácome Moreno, *"*Composiciones visuales: Mathias Goeritz en Guadalajara,*"* in *Estudios Jaliscienses*, no 81 (2010): 56-67.

cosmopolitan figures, such as Juan Rulfo, Olivia Zúñiga, Chucho Reyes Ferreira, and Juan Soriano, among others, Jalisco society in general had a strong conservative outlook. Therefore, it was unlikely that International art, such as that shown in Goeritz's galleries, would be accepted openly in social circles. Goeritz realized that and started to work in the artistic circles in México City. His first job was with Luis Barragán, who commissioned him to do a larger version of his *Animal Herido* sculpture for the entry way of *El Pedregal* subdivision, "the most elegant of the capital," as it was prominently advertised. Goeritz's artistic and intellectual personality soon became more visible, when he moved to México City in 1953.

In 1954, he became head of the Visual Education Workshop at the National School of Architecture of the Universidad Nacional Autonóma de México (Figure. 4 and 5). Two years later, the private Jesuit run Ibero-American University invited him to start the School of Visual Arts, which he led for four years. At the Ibero-American University, he founded the first industrial design workshops in the country and was also founder of the school of architecture at the same university in 1956.[86] At the Ibero-American University Goeritz taught students like Pedro Friedeberg, Lourdes Grobet and Argentinian Liliana Porter. As Florencia Bazzano-Nelson mentions on her book, "Porter found in the work of Mathias Goeritz a more exciting and viable aesthetic model."[87] Compared to the social realism aspects that in the late 1950s still had an important

[86] Jorge Alberto Manrique, "Mathias Goeritz, el provocador," in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz*, eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta…, 148.

[87] Florencia Bazzano-Nelson, *Liliana Porter and the Art of Simulation* (London: Ashgate, 2008), 19.

presence, Porter says, Goeritz, "was an example of freedom, of being a transgressor, of new ideas."[88] Porter acknowledged how much she learnt from the experimental workshops of Mathias Goeritz.

MÉXICO CITY

When Goeritz moved to México City in 1953, the city was on the cusp of a demographic explosion, urban transformation, and new cultural production. From 1940 to 1960, the metropolitan area's population surged from 1.7 million to 5.4 million.[89] The 1950s and 60s in México were a watershed time for the Mexican art world. These years parallel the development of a city shifting its constructive energies from the center to its periphery. The construction of the new university campus, *Ciudad Universitaria*, (University City: C. U.), far from downtown signified a shifting of intellectual capital from Centro Historico (historic center) to the periphery where the intellectual and educational institutions were being established by the State.[90]

Abstract art took many different forms, from the amorphous styles developed before World War I to a more geometric abstraction that reflected a concern with the new cosmic and technological age. The dynamic forms and spatial investigations that Goeritz started producing seemed to correspond with the mindset of some architects at the time,

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[88] Merry MacMasters, "Después de más de medio siglo, Liliana Porter vuelve a mostrar obra en México," Periódico *La Jornada*. Martes 10 de marzo de 2009, p. 8.

[89] Gilbert Joseph, Anne Rubinstein, and Eric Zolov, eds., *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture since 1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 82.

[90] Besides the National University, we have the Casa de España that later became the Colegio de México, the Universidad Iberoamericana, among other institutions.

such as Luis Barragán (1902-1988)[91] and Félix Candela (1910-1997).[92] Goeritz and Barragán had a long artistic collaboration, exemplified by the work done at *Las Capuchinas* convent and *Torres de Ciudad Satélite*, in México City. Félix Candela was a Spanish born architect who arrived in México when he was twenty-six. Goeritz and Candela shared, among other things, speaking German and working together on the 1968 Olympic Games.

Among elites, the national obsessions of México in the 20th century include modernization, and nationalism. The 1950s represent one of the periods where debates of the new national identity were again articulated through the visual arts and architecture. By this time, the Muralists, also known as Mexican School, were wholly exhausted, and new conversations were needed to refresh or reinvigorate the artistic dialogue. It is useful to go back a few decades, from the study period of this work, to understand the social context of identity, nationalism, and *Mexicanidad* to understand the aggressive reception, from muralists' artists and nationalistic writers of Goeritz's work.

THE ORIGINS OF THE CULTURAL DEBATE: 1925 TO 1940S

The national identity debates of the mid-20th Century were sparked in 1925, when a host of issues conspired to increase national pride and introspection. Víctor Díaz

[91] Pritzker Architecture Prize, 1980.

[92] Candela was included in several exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art including *Twentieth Century Engineering*, in 1964 as well as the landmark *Latin American Architecture since 1945* show and the *Structure and Space in Contemporary Engineering* exhibition, both held in 1955.

Arciniega's [93] and philosopher Samuel Ramos' works are fundamental in understanding this process.[94] In *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México,* Ramos suggested that Mexicans suffered collectively from an inferiority complex that they needed to overcome to successfully resist foreign cultural influences and participate in the modern world more effectively. He criticized the excessive reliance on and imitation of European culture in the efforts to develop a national identity; and yet, acknowledged the importance of European models to Mexican history and culture. The *Ateneo de la Juventud* [95] and the *Contemporáneos* were amongst the literary and cultural groups with a significant cosmopolitan, international focus. Both situated themselves in opposition to official national projects (those of the Porfiriato [96] and the post-Revolutionary regime, respectively), instead turning towards modern Europe and their Western cultural heritage.

Cosmopolitanism was intended to open Mexican culture up to new influences that would contribute to the formation of a new national identity and allow México to participate more fully in the international cultural arena. To this end, the group promoted works that they considered to be representative of a universal style of Mexican literature, not just as Mexican but as "Universal" and, often, Spanish-American as well. Alfonso Reyes (1889-1959), co-founder of the *Ateneo,* was a key figure whose desire to revive

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[93] Víctor Díaz Arciniega, *Querella por la cultura "revolucionaria," 1925: Vida y Pensamiento de México* (Ciudad de México: FCE, 2010).

[94] My translation: *The profile of man and culture in México*. Samuel Ramos, *El Perfil del Hombre y la cultura en México*. 16th ed. (Ciudad de México: Espasa-Calpe Mexicana, 1988).

[95] My translation: Athenaeum of Youth.

[96] Refers to the administration of Porfirio Díaz, president of México, on and off from 1876 to 1911.

Mexican culture by drawing on the strengths of Western culture had a tremendous influence from his time in the *Ateneo* until his death in 1959. He sponsored and mentored many younger writers such as Carlos Fuentes. Reyes attempted to reconfigure a fractured post-revolutionary Mexican identity by reconciling and blending pre-Hispanic and modern-day Mexican cultures in his seminal essay, *Visión de Anáhuac (1519),* published in 1917.[97] The Dominican critic Pedro Henríquez Ureña, and fellow Mexicans Antonio Caso and José Vasconcelos were co-founders of the *Ateneo*. Their joint effort paved the way for the emerging notion of *mestizaje* and for the elaboration of a cultural national aesthetic. After the Mexican revolution, this was an important agenda where the idea of nationalism needed to be reinforced.

The first expression, originally articulated in *Visión de Anáhuac,* would find its highest expression in Vasconcelos' *La Raza Cósmica*, where the idealized image of *Mestizaje* as an end-of-history "cosmic race" inaugurates a contentious site of nation building and racial politics. [98] At the center of the *Mestizaje* notion was Vasconcelos's belief that, historically, all great works of art and periods of culture resulted from the mixture of various races. Latin America stood to benefit from miscegenation effected by the Spanish Conquest and subsequent colonization and was poised to be at the center of a

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[97] Alfonso Reyes, *Visión de Anáhuac (1519)* (Madrid: Índice, 1923).

[98] Cosmic Race refers to the 1925 essay written by José Vasconcelos to express the ideology of a future "fifth race" in the Americas; "an agglomeration of all the races in the world with no respect to color or number to erect a new civilization: Universópolis." José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica: Misión de la raza iberoamericana. Notas de viajes a la América del Sur* (Madrid: Agencia Mundial de Librería, 1925).

new "cosmic race." The second articulation, prefigured in Reyes' *Cuestiones Estéticas,*[99] would be achieved by Pedro Henríquez Ureña's systematization of cultural production in *Seis ensayos en busca de nuestra expresión.* In these works, Henríquez Ureña depicted Latin America's literary production as a coherent whole.[100]

The *Mexicanidad* movement that arose after the Mexican Revolution, led by a community of artists, writers, and political activists, realigned national identity with México's indigenous and ancient heritage rather than its colonial past.[101] It championed all things Mexican by asserting the distinctiveness of native indigenous culture. The Mexican revolutionaries were not in agreement as to what kind of architecture was best suited to achieve their social and economic goals. Muralists and architects of diverse political persuasions were enlisted by the revolutionary state, in some cases to improve working and living conditions, yet in others to glorify the revolution and the regime. Several laws were passed to promote low-cost, affordable housing specifically for workers. As we have read earlier in this chapter, *Mexicanidad* issues were not just present in cultural debates; they were also present in architecture. Three architectural languages—the *Neo-Colonial*, the *International Modern* and the *Mexican Modern*—help to put the work of Goeritz into the national architectural context. The *Mexican Modern*

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[99] Alfonso Reyes, *Cuestiones Estéticas* (Paris: Librería Ollendorff, 1911).

[100] Pedro Henríquez Ureña, *Seis ensayos en busca de nuestra expresión* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Babel, 1928).

[101] The first important study of Colonial art was published in 1948 by Manuel Toussaint *Arte Colonial en México*.

style is the architecture closest to Goeritz aesthetic; from the influence of pre-Hispanic monumentality and abstraction of its iconography in sculpture.

MATHIAS GOERITZ'S WORK THROUGH THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

Goeritz's architectural work was influenced by his practice as a sculptor using architectural space as his primary building material, modeling the immaterial to create places designed to elicit emotional responses. An approximation to his work by using the following theory will bring new light to his oeuvre.

Theorist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *social space*[102] clarifies Mathias Goertiz's oeuvre. Bourdieu argues that to explain an event, it is insufficient to look at what was said, or what happened. Rather, explanation is achieved by examining the social space or field in which interactions, transactions, and events occur. My work attempts to place Goeritz's interventions in mid-twentieth century Mexican art by considering his background and field of action. As is explained in chapter II, *el eco* represented, at that moment in time, a space engaged by a multitude of nationalities and performative arts. According to Bourdieu, an analysis of social space meant not only locating the object by researching its specific historical and local/national/international and relational context, but also interrogating the ways in which previous knowledge about the object under investigation had been generated. I am especially interested in examining what Bourdieu called *Field of Power*, which consists of multiple social fields such as economic, educational, artistic, bureaucratic, and political fields. Since Goeritz used all these fields

[102] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and structure of the literary field,* translated by Susan Emmanuel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

as a professor, creator, consultant, and writer, a useful dialogue emerges to further examine the knowledge and contributions of his artistic production.

Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital, including sub-fields such as cultural and linguistic fields, can be used to comment on Goeritz's contacts such as scholars, intellectuals, and artists and their significance to his work. Subsequent chapters will include Goeritz's writings in international magazines like *Leonardo, Architecture, Formes. Fonctions, Ver y Estimar, Sur,* and his own editorial work at *Arquitectura/México,* to help explain this concept.

Bourdieu designates the group highest in cultural capital as the "dominated fraction of the dominant group;" that is, an intelligentsia based on fields of symbolic production, especially in education, but lower in economic capital. Those highest in cultural capital (in the form of possession of "legitimate culture") are those highest in educational capital. Goeritz had the necessary capital and tools to begin changing cultural production in México because of his Ph.D. in art history and extended international art network. One way that Goeritz transformed cultural production was through his treatment of space. By using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of Significant Capital, I will depict Goeritz as a prominent artist with individual shows in Carstairs Gallery in New York and Iris Clert in Paris, and with an international network of prominent curators and directors of international museums.

Along with Bourdieu's work, Michel Foucault's texts articulate the importance of space, an importance shared by Goeritz. As Foucault explains, "A critique could be carried out of this devaluation of space that has prevailed for generations." He continues,

"Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, and the immobile. Time on the other hand, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic. If one started to talk in terms of space that meant one was hostile to time."[103] In 1967, Foucault presented his lecture titled *The Other Spaces*[104] ("Des Espace Autres"), to a group of architecture students, and introduced the world to his three-fold classification of space: Real, Utopian, and Heterotopian. Foucault explains that all spaces exist in certain relation to each other and to the social structures of power. Although heterotopia exists in relation to social power, Foucault asserts that heterotopia is a kind of neutral zone beyond the dominion of conventional social structures of power and power relations. Mathias Goeritz's *Experimental Museum: el eco* is a good example of Heterotopic space. The space was created using only two drawings and no architectural plans.[105] Goeritz sculpted the place because he did not have architectural knowledge but knew how to deal with spaces and voids. Anticipating by many years the activities that have become standard in many contemporary spaces, Goeritz was interested in the energy that could be created when artists are free to experiment, and of creating a dynamic space where the public could participate. The atmosphere was then more of what Foucault describes as time in festival

[103] Michel Foucault, *Power Knowledge* (Brighton: Harvester, 1980), 70.

[104] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," originally given as a lecture in 1967, and published by the French journal *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité,* October, 1984.

[105] This is a scholarly consensus. See, Keith L. Eggener, "Expressionism and Emotional Architecture in México: Luis Barragán's Collaborations with Max Cetto and Mathias Goeritz," Journal *of the History of Architecture*, (January 1995): 89. Louise Pelletier, "Modeling the Void," *Journal of Architectural Education* 62.2 (Nov 2008): 6. Architect Ruth Rivera, a good friend of Goeritz's, provided the architectonic plans but only for official requirements.

mode, where time is fluid and temporal. Goeritz's *el eco* was more like a theatre, a complete art experience inspired by the Café Voltaire of Dada's fame.[106] The space was not a receptacle of a collection but more the collective experience of artists and the public. There were performances, a bar, an art gallery, and a place where every artist could do something different from his discipline.

By studying the artistic, literary, and architectural tendencies that emerged after the Revolution, we see that Goeritz's production becomes part of a response to its perceived cultural impulse and to the debates and polemics emerging within the European, and Latin American avant-garde. The organization of the present study, therefore, follows a set of conversations between the artistic, literary, and architectural tendencies to better understand the national debates. My goal is to make a loosely arranged chronological sequence to come together within the art historical development and transformation of México where Goeritz's artistic contributions serve as a catalyst for change in urban sculpture.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

As previously mentioned, in this dissertation I investigate five of Goeritz's seminal works: *Museo Experimental: el eco, Mensajes Series*, Church interventions, *Torres de Ciudad Satélite,* and *Ruta de la Amistad.* By incorporating Goeritz's writings,

[106] Founded in Zurich, in 1916, by Hugo Ball and Emmy Hennings. The cafe exhibited radically experimental artists, many of whom went on to change the face of their artistic disciplines; featured artists included Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Giorgio de Chirico, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, and Max Ernst.

this dissertation provides a nuance which has not been done before. What follows is a summary of the dissertation's chapters.

Chapter II will concentrate on what many scholars consider Goeritz's Magnum Opus: *Museo Experimental: el eco*. *El eco* is also very important for this dissertation since it's the first space created by Goeritz with the conception of spirituality in mind. Inspired by this work he wrote and published his emotional architecture manifesto (Figure 6). *El eco* also provided Goeritz with his first international review, and the attention of international writers and artists visiting/living in México.[107] Writer Selden Rodman, visiting México in 1956-57, to interview artists and intellectuals for his book *Mexican Journal: The Conquerors Conquered*, observed Goeritz's cosmopolitanism by describing him as "one of those world-culture Germans who used to be so familiar in the days of the Weimar Republic."[108]

Emotional architecture reintroduced the temporality of human experience in the very conception of a building. Goeritz's manifesto fell within that tradition and brought it to a new level of understanding. For example, Goeritz's *Museo Experimental: el eco* was not a repository of objects, but a living entity in which every wall, window, hallway, and courtyard was used for various activities and every space was designed to produce an emotion on the visitor.

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[107] Anita Brenner, "Summer in México," *Art News*, LIII, 4 (June/July/August 1954): 59-67.

[108] Selden Rodman, *Mexican Journal: The Conquerors Conquered* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1958), 94.

While chapter II focuses on *El eco,* a space where Goeritz developed his idea of "emotional architecture" as a counterpoint to the pragmatism of functionalist architecture**,** chapter III will build on Goeritz's spiritual ideas through the study of the artist art interventions in churches and on the *Mensajes Series.* Both projects will be examined by using his written articles and historical context. While in Guadalajara, Goeritz discovered the close relationship people had with religion and generated a process of adopting several religious practices, a process that many artists of his generation also experienced after the postwar moral crisis.[109]

At the invitation of renowned architects, Luis Barragán and Ricardo de Robina, Goeritz participated in the renovation or construction of several churches. Specifically, he worked on four of México City churches, the Cuernavaca cathedral and one convent. We should recall that beginning around 1950 and for the next few decades, rapid population growth required the construction of new churches, while liturgical reform demanded the renovation of old ones. This situation created a highly attractive field of work for Goeritz, allowing him to address his primary concerns about employing art for the benefit of religious devotion. The design of his stained-glass windows and minimal gilded altars derived from his philosophy of art. Goeritz's belief of art to be transcendent is further analyzed in this chapter. It is against this background that Mathias Goeritz was invited to collaborate as an artist and artistic consultant. An analysis of the works produced at every one of these religious spaces will be done as well as their cultural context.

[109] Ángel Ferrant, Barnett Newman, among others.

Chapter IV includes a discussion of the *Torres de Ciudad Satélite*, along with a conversation of Goeritz's philosophical ideas through his articles at *Arquitectura/México* magazine and other publications. *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* is the monumental urban work that Goeritz considered a spiritual prayer and that became well known internationally; it was used as a banner of modernity for México. Throughout *Arquitectura/México* magazine, Goeritz established a critical transnational network that laid out significant conceptual frameworks for the art of the period. As the editor of the visual arts section of *Arquitectura/México* he could correspond with different avant-garde groups in Europe like Alfred Schmela and the *Zero* group from Germany as well as members of the French group *Nouveau Réalisme*. My aim is to contextualize Goeritz's work within the neo-avant-garde currents of the 1960s by exposing the artist's interventions in the international scene through his correspondence, writings, and exhibitions in New York, Düsseldorf and Paris, and that way explore Goeritz's international strategies.

I include a discussion of Carlos Fuentes work to contextualize Goeritz's practice in the México City of that period. The figure of Carlos Fuentes is important as one of the founders of the Latin American literary boom. The same year that the *Torres* were completed Carlos Fuentes published his first novel, *La Región más Transparente* (1958). Fuentes presents a model of relating to urban popular culture that was celebratory and at the same time presents the reader with dystopian visions by presenting an undesirable world. According to Steven Boldly, *Where the Air is Clear* is the novel *par excellence* of

México City.[110] Fuentes presents a vast fresco of the types and issues of the emerging modern city of the 1950s. The novel offers a compare/contrast mechanism of how Fuentes saw the changing modern metropolis, that correlate with aesthetic changes instigated by Goeritz.

Chapter V includes a reading of Goeritz's 1960s writings and the four manifestos that the artist wrote from 1960 to 1961. In these documents, Goeritz spiritual concerns are present. It also offers a discussion on the value of publishing and distributing your work that contradicts his spiritual aspirations. Goeritz never wrote for himself; yet, the pursuit of a public reading of his work, especially internationally, was an important strategy element of his practice. A special section of the chapter will include a discussion of a historic group exhibit organized by Goeritz. The show titled *Los Hartos* (The Fed-Ups) is considered a foundational moment in the genealogy of conceptualism in México. The exhibit was accompanied by a manifesto. The chapter will also include a reflection on Goeritz's international activities.

This same chapter incorporates an interpretation of the work of writer Jose Revueltas. His 1962, *Ensayo sobre un proletariado sin cabeza* was one of the first political works in México that attempted to analyze the mechanisms through which the Mexican State legitimized itself based on an appropriation of all the symbols, myths and ideas generated from the Revolution. I am using the writing of Revueltas because it illuminates the failures of the Mexican modernist project and their obvious appropriation

[110] Steven Boldy, "Facing up to the other: Carlos Fuentes and the Mexican identity," in *Third World Quarterly*,vol. 10 no. 1 (Jan. 1988): 289.

of symbols, myths and ideas. Revueltas reading will serve as reflection on the appropriation of Goeritz's *Torres* and *Ruta de la Amistad*. Despite Goeritz's spiritual conception, *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* becomes a monumental prop of consumerism due to the use of the image in several advertisement campaigns. A reflection is done in discussing the work of Goeritz's sculptural project *The Route of Friendship*. The artist was the creator of the concept, collaborator and coordinator of the art section of the 1968 Olympiad. I finish the chapter correlating the work of Goeritz with *El Apando,* the José Revueltas novel, that captures the violence suffered by the students and leaders of the student movement of 1968.[111]

Chapter VI is the conclusion of this dissertation, and wraps up the arguments of this work with a final reflection.

In this introduction, I have worked to situate Goeritz's aesthetics and philosophy in relation to Mexican Muralism, and Goeritz's emphasis on Spiritualism at odds with a mostly atheist view of the Muralists and the State. My attempt is to provide a general background of the art and culture debates happening at that point in time. The theme of architecture is an important one because Goeritz could produce his most seminal works with the collaboration of architects. Most importantly, I provided a foundation of the main theme of this dissertation, spirituality and the sub-theme, internationalization.

[111] José Revueltas, *El Apando* (Ciudad de México: Ediciones Era, 1969).

Chapter II: Museo Experimental: el eco

For Goeritz, the institutionalization of a political message in art and the demand for purely functional architecture were impediments to the transformation of society. These forces produced art and architecture that lacked a sense of humanity because they did not address the viewer or user in a direct way. Goeritz believed art and architecture needed a performative quality to avoid being either commodities separated from the everyday lives of users or pre-digested messages to be consumed uncritically by viewers. Instead, he produced art and architecture that fostered an inner psychological and emotional condition to counteract the excessive rationality of modern life. Goeritz believed that art, beyond what it represents, needs to fulfill an emotional function.

Goeritz's work also rejected the realistically depicted and easily understandable ideological messages painted by the muralists. Goeritz aimed to make art that would not merely be passively received but would elicit emotions from its viewers and users, making them participants in the construction of its meaning. As a doctor in art history, Goeritz was captivated by architectural works that inspired all the arts to converge. The notion of a sanctuary for artistic creation was a constant motif in the project's conception.

The purpose of this chapter is to argue that the main principle in the conception of the *Museo Experimental: el eco* was to create a space where architecture and form becomes the carrier of intellectual and spiritual content. By proposing that the building be a work of art (sculpture/architecture) the structure would operate as a work of art as well,

and, as a result, would incite the user to react emotionally. *el eco*[112] was one of Goeritz's most daring projects, serving as a workshop where painting, sculpture, architecture, dance, and poetry were combined. Based on this space, Goeritz developed his idea of "emotional architecture" as a counterpoint to the pragmatism of functionalist art. It was also his first work that received an international review.[113]

EMOTIONAL ARCHITECTURE MANIFESTO

Inaugurated in México City on September 7, 1953, *el eco* was a space that exemplified Goeritz's conception of emotional architecture.[114] Reacting against the hyper-rationalist quality of the then- México prevalent functionalist style, he advocated a mode of architecture that used modern forms and materials to spiritually elevate the viewer. He also clearly stated his position regarding artistic integration, a concept that he addressed critically and that it will gain him discord from the muralist artists, (I am delving in this matter in a few pages down). As he wrote in his *Manifiesto de Arquitectura Emocional*,

> At *el eco*, artistic integration was not understood as part of the program, but in a natural sense; it was not about hanging works of art or adding sculptures to the building like it's usually done with movie posters or with carpets hanging down from palace's balconies, but with the idea that the architectural space needed to be understood as a big sculptural element, without falling for the

[112] I am not using capital e on "el eco" since I am respecting Goeritz original font design of the name of the museum.

[113] Anita Brenner, "Summer in México," Art News (June 1954): 67.

[114] The manifesto was first read at *el eco* opening night, September 1953. Mathias Goeritz's''Manifiesto de Arquitectura Emocional,'' was published for the first time, as "Arquitectura Emocional: *El eco*" in the *Cuadernos de Arquitectura*, num. 1 (Guadalajara, 1954): s.p.

> romanticism of Gaudi or the emptiness of Neo-classical German or Italian art.[115]

Goeritz regarded artistic practice as a mode of liberation, as a process by which he could undo traditional categories of the artist, art object, and viewer. He envisioned the individual, who experienced the work, not as a passive spectator but as an active participant in the work's creation. Thus, Goeritz developed new forms and ideas that created the concept of space as a living entity in constant flux, and as an open and dynamic field of action rather than as the container of completed events or static objects. Following the opening of *el eco,* Goeritz published the manifesto, that synthesized his architectural ideas. "Only by receiving true emotion from architecture will man be able to consider it art."[116] He elaborates on his manifesto:

> Art in general, including architecture, reflects the spiritual state of Man, in his time. However, there is the impression that the modern architect, individualistic and intellectual, sometimes exaggerates—perhaps for having lost close contact with his community—in wanting to overemphasize that rational part of architecture. As a result, man in the 20th century feels crushed or overwhelmed by an excess of functionalism, by so much logic and utility within modern architecture. He looks for a way out, but neither exterior aestheticism understood as ''formalism,'' nor organic regionalism, nor the inflexible spreading of confusion has confronted the source of the problem: man—creator or recipient—of our time aspires to something more than a beautiful, pleasant, and appropriate house. He asks—or will have to ask one day—from architecture and its modern mediums a spiritual elevation; simply put: an emotion.[117]

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[115] Goeritz, "Manifiesto de la Arquitectura Emocional" in Leonor Cuahonte, *El eco de Mathias Goeritz*: *Pensamientos y Dudas Autocríticas* (Ciudad de México: UNAM, 2007), 29.

[116] Ibid., 28.

[117] Ibid., 27-28.

As stated in the last line of the above manifesto, Goeritz associated spirituality to emotion. He implored for art/architecture that could surprise the visitor and take them to get in touch with their feelings. Goeritz 's upbringing, in an Anglo-Saxon culture, where emotions are supposed to be reigned and controlled, were confronted with his experiences of living in North Africa and Southern Spain. Living in those two geographical areas brought a new emotional perspective that he appreciated and that he thought was important. Based on Wassily Kandinsky writings, among others, Goeritz related emotion to the experience that individuals lived while visiting, for example, Gothic churches. Furthermore, the notion of spirituality as the cultivation of self-awareness is at the heart of his thinking.

To bring more clarity to the concept of spirituality in Goeritz's work is necessary to talk about religion and the difference in these two terms. For this work spirituality can be understood as a concern for nonmaterial issues, relating to the deepest part of the self, where one senses a regard for things or feelings for which one has a higher than average valuation. Confronting one's spirituality requires a deep awareness and attentiveness toward the inner self, not as egocentrism, but rather in service to a relationship with others. Spirituality also includes, but is not limited to, a quest for a sense of unity wherein the material is not the primary focus. Goeritz's spirituality is about transformative experiences through artistic creation. Encounters like walking into an unexpected space, at *el eco*; or perceptual bodily transformations, at his stained-glass church works because of his created environment. On Goeritz's work viewpoint, religion can be defined as a

practice among a community of believers, with rituals, and beliefs set forth in artistic form. Profesor van Ness explains, "Not everything spiritual must be religious; there are ways of understanding the world as a cosmic whole and the self as an enduring agent that are not directly indebted to religion .... Being spiritual is an attribute of the way one experiences the world and lives one's life." [118] Religion provided Goeritz faith in his work and a source of serenity in turbulent times.

Before the design of *el eco,* Goeritz embarked on his first religious inspired sculptural work. Arriving in Guadalajara in 1949, a deeply religious city influenced by strict Catholicism, Goeritz began his first series of religious sculptural works, a set of ten crucifixion sculptures in wood, bronze, stone, and forged iron. They were all made between 1950 and 1952, and are known collectively as *Salvador de Auschwitz*. The sculptures present a simplified form of the martyrdom of the cross. The *Salvador de Auschwitz* series shares no connection with his work at *el eco*; however, the series served as a precedent of the religious root of his work.[119] His philosophical and aesthetic concerns were always aligned with his faith: "My problem is God, because as a man he came to this world, got into a lot of problems, and then basically committed suicide; mostly because he defended whom at the end did not defend him."[120] This quote comes from the interview-style book that Guatemalan author Mario Monteforte Toledo wrote.

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[118] Peter H. van Ness, "Introduction: Spirituality and the secular quest," in Peter H. van Ness, ed. *Spirituality and the secular quest* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996), 1-17.

[119] Goeritz produced a suite of Christ related gouache while living in Spain in the mid forty's.

[120] Mario Monteforte Toledo, *Conversaciones con Mathias Goeritz* (México City: Siglo XXI, 1993), 13.

The book is based on casual conversations conducted over several years and give us a valuable tool to interpreted Goeritz's thoughts and ideas outside of his own writings.

On March 27 1952, Mathias Goeritz opened his second solo exhibition at *Galería de Arte Mexicano* in México City, *Mathias Goeritz: Exhibition of paintings and sculptures*.[121] It showed works made since his 1949 arrival in México: six paintings, one drawing, and thirty sculptures. It was there that Goeritz met art promoter Daniel Mont, an entrepreneur from Guadalajara, who had founded the galleries *Mont-Orendain* in 1947, and *Mont*, in June 1952, both in México City.[122] Mont and Goeritz met again in April of the same year.[123] At that time Daniel Mont proposed that Goeritz build whatever he liked on a small plot, 530 square meters, on Sullivan Street, México City. Mont did not even own the lot but claimed, "I know a man who will buy it and not have to pay for several years, and another man who will underwrite the construction costs."[124] Goeritz would have total freedom in his creative ideas. Mont simply offered the means to achieve it. Goeritz writes,

> Then, during a trip to Fortin de las Flores, I made a few sketches of an 'Imaginary' or 'Experimental Museum' that did not yet exist in Paris, New York or México. When I showed them to Daniel, they

[121] Exhibition invite at Goeritz archive *Fondo Mathias Goeritz,* Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara, México.

[122] The Galería de Arte Mexicano, Mont-Orendain and Mont were the three most active in showing works not only of Mexican artists but also international ones that were living in México. The only one that is still active is Galería de Arte Mexicano.

[123] Mathias Goeritz, "Arquitectura emocional?" *Arquitectura,* ENA, núm. 8-9 (Ciudad de México, mayo-junio 1960):17-22.

[124] Selden Rodman, *Mexican Journal: The Conquerors Conquered* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1958), 94.

> excited him, and he began to convince his investors about the work I had suggested. For that lunacy to produce money, a bar and a restaurant had to be included in the plan."[125]

Goeritz, who repeatedly had expressed, "México is the country where everything is possible," enthusiastically proceeded with the project.[126] Goeritz was forever grateful to the generosity and enthusiasm of Daniel Mont, and in his honor named his only child Luis Daniel, Luis for Luis Barragán and Daniel for Mr. Mont.

On June 27, 1952, Mont and Goeritz signed the contract for the construction of *el eco,* which included fees and budget. Goeritz agreed to design the plans and supervise its completion. According to the contract, Goeritz could employ the assistance of an architect or professional draughtsman.[127] There was also the commitment to create two sculptures.[128] Construction began in September 1952, and the official opening took place on September 7, 1953.

Goeritz approached the architectural task from the unconventional practice of a conceptual artist modeling matter and void with less concern for a unifying image than the emotions and human activities that give life to places. This desire to provoke emotional responses via his architectural works was planned by the artist as a way of

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[125] Mathias Goeritz, "Arquitectura emocional?" *Arquitectura,* ENA, núm. 8-9 (Ciudad de México, mayo-junio 1960):17-22.

[126] Mathias Goeritz words cited by Lily Kassner, *Mathias Goeritz: Una Biografia, 1915-1990* (Ciudad de México: Conaculta, INBA, 1998), 77

[127] Architect Ruth Rivera, daughter of Diego Rivera, was the technical adviser, according to text in Paul F. Damaz, "Experimental Architecture: The Emotional Architecture of Mathias Goeritz" in *Art in Latin American Architecture* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1963), 222.

[128] Contract between Daniel Mont y Mathias Goeritz, CENIDIAP, *Fondo Goeritz*, México DF.

captivating the visitor and making him/her an integral part of the work. Goeritz belongs to the post-war generation interested in activating space. Brazilian artists Helio Oiticica (1937-1980), and Ligia Clark (1920-1988), worked with similar art practices and concerns. The viewer becomes the work of art, since by participating he or she is completing the artist's proposition.

In challenging various conventional notions about art, Goeritz called into question the very status of the artist. In the making of *el eco*, he blurred the boundaries between modes of production: the building is the product of the artist/sculptor/poet who works as an architect, who remains subservient to a collective team of physical and intellectual workers, and who made their "contributions with advice or direct intervention when necessary."[129] Goeritz believed early on in crossing disciplines. He enacted a radical vision in which the work was to no longer be attached to previous forms of visual experiences for its understanding; instead, he placed a great emphasis on movement, on sensual experience, and on the effects of space and its perception.

The construction of *el eco* occurred without any precise plans and was left somewhat to chance or to the whims of the designer and his team. Goeritz, in other words, abandoned the heroic idea of the artist as a sole author of the work of art. He carried forward this shift in the production of the work of art from the realm of the specialized artist to the (anonymous) craftsman in the gold-leaf monochromes, *Mensajes Series*, and the *Goldene Botschaft* [130] both of which Goeritz ordered and specified over

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[129] Ibid.

the telephone,[131] I explore this matter in next chapter. According to Goeritz: "I order my [pieces] through the telephone, as Malevich had prophesized, considering them as decorative objects that needed to subordinate to a whole to achieve a spiritual atmosphere. I saw the need to abandon the concept of art as an individual expression."[132]

Emotional architecture reintroduced the temporality of human experience in the very conception of a building. Goeritz's manifesto fell within that tradition and brought it to a new level of understanding. Goeritz's museum was not a repository of objects, but a living entity in which every wall, window, hallway, and courtyard was used for various activities. The entire building was a vital, organic place, and not one of repose or contemplation. The bar worked as an advantage since artists could gather to talk and interact. Carlos Mérida developed a mural with a colorful geometric abstract composition. Originally situated in the museum long bar area, the mural continued to integrate the door leading to the space's bathrooms (Figure 7). Mérida's geometrical figures of fishes and faces, get lost among triangles and trapezoids of polychrome wood, hugged the walls of the bar in *el eco,* providing movement to their rough linear surface.

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[130] Refers to the 1959 Goeritz concrete poetry work.

[131] As the publisher, Hansjörg Mayer, explained, "[The *Goldene Botschaft* can be] designated as telephone art. In this case, the artist ordered directly over the telephone the twelve examples of the golden message printed here." *Futura 1* (1965): n.p.

[132] Mathias Goeritz, *Arquitectura/México* (1962) quoted in Kassner, *Mathias Goeritz*, 181. The reference to Malevich is to a 1924 text probably written by Malevich (although authorship is assigned to El Lissitzky): "Now the production of art has been simplified to such an extent that one can do no better than order one's paintings by telephone from a house painter while one is lying in bed." Quoted in Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "The Primary Colors for the Second Time: A Paradigm Repetition of the Neo-Avant-Garde," October 37 (Summer 1986): 45.

Mérida like Goeritz, understood that Latin American ancient cultures were more closely related to the geometry of images and abstraction.

The patio was a place for self-exploration, in which a filmmaker like Luis Buñuel could be invited to choreograph a dance. It wasn't relevant whether Buñuel was a professional choreographer. What was important was that he was given the opportunity to experiment with professional dancers. Goeritz invited Walter Nicks and his *Ballet Negro* ensemble to perform. Along, guests could hear the percussion music composed and performed by Russian-American Lan Adomian who self-exiled in México due to the US anti-communist crusade of the 1950s.[133]

Artist German Cueto created a couple of *sculpture-paintings*, stone relief work that projected out off the walls (Figure 8). The works had elements of abstract figuration and were installed at the staircase walls leading to an intimate art gallery located on the second floor. The art gallery exhibited etchings by artists such as Picasso, Orozco, Klee, Ferrant, Chagall and Arp. Goeritz envisioned this space as a contemplative and quiet one in comparison with the restaurant-bar downstairs where dialogue and exchange of ideas were more appropriate.

As you arrive at *el eco* on Sullivan Street, you encounter an exterior black wall that breaks with the aesthetic of the rest of the block. This is significant because an

[133] His birth name was Moguilov-Podolsk, (Ukraine, 1905- México, DF 1979). He immigrated with his family to the United States in 1923. Adomian was part of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade which volunteered to travel to Spain to help fight fascism. Adomian returned from Spain to the United States in late 1938. In 1952, he emigrated to México because he could not get work due to his participation in the Lincoln Brigade and his associations with communist causes. Adomian remained in México, until his death in 1979, after years of successfully creating film scores and winning recognition such as receiving a Guggenheim grant.

element of surprise and curiosity is introduced in the visitor. On the right side of the black wall, a square shape entrance with a sheet metal revolving door. The building and adjacent patio walls are composed of simple geometric forms that compositionally functioned like a Non-Objective painting. The windowless façade of the building is punctuated only by the word, *el eco*, written in cursive, in a crooked manner, next to the entrance door. The contrast of the curvilinear script and the straight lines of the wall is a hint of the contrasts and unusual juxtapositions that occurred within the interior. They are significant because Goeritz is articulating an element of surprise, emotion, on the viewer by contrasting the "hand" cursive work against a straight-line construction. During the museum open hours, the door is always half open, a sense of voyeurism is created in the visitor. Stepping in and from the street, a hallway can be seen, that plays with our visual perception and stirs a sense of profound distance, because its rough white walls begin to close in until they reach a point of relief, perceived through a well-lit end of the corridor.

We can visualize the space with the art thanks to the detailed documentation of photographer Marianne Gast.[134] The art works are the only items that were not included in the 2004 restoration of *el eco*. After years of neglect *el eco* was restored and reopened in 2005. It is owned and managed by the National University (UNAM) and presents artistic projects. A giant, over sixteen feet tall, grotesque figure, part of a 1,000-square foot grisaille mural, was the focal point at the end of the dark corridor. A total seven

[134] Photographs at the *Fondo Mathias Goeritz*, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

figures were inspired by popular Mexican *papier mache* works that symbolize Judas.[135] The number seven represented an important kabbalistic symbol for Goeritz, as divine achievement, and he used that number in several of his projects.[136] During a visit to the house of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in San Angel, Henry Moore saw popular Mexican Judas figures, of which he made several sketches. [137] Later, Alfonso Soto transferred these sketches to the wall of *el eco* via photographic blow-ups executed by Goeritz's wife, the accomplished photographer, Marianne Gast.

The contrast between the dark hall and the sharp white of the mural's background increased the viewer's uneasiness and surely surprised any visitor. By using black and white colors, Goeritz purpose was the causation of spirituality. White represents purity, black is a color that is typically associated with the unknown, it can represent strength or aggression. Goeritz decided on only using grey color for the mural lines as a neutrality representation. With these limited color palette Goeritz intended to heighten the physical experience of the visitor. This mural was first projected by Rufino Tamayo, who drew on the wall the main lines of its composition. Tamayo was unable to complete the work due to Daniel Mont's financial problems. While Henry Moore was visiting México, Goeritz hosted him and took him to pre-Hispanic sites and other places like *Xochimilco* and, of

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[135] Inspired by p*apier mâché* devils symbolizing *Judas* Iscariot commonly burned during Holy Week celebrations in México.

[136] Catherine Swietlicki, "Terra Nostra: Carlos Fuentes' kabbalistic world," *Symposium* (summer 1981): 33-2.

[137] Maria Lukin, "Henry Moore's Mural," *Art Digest*, vol. 28, no. 19 (August 1954): 19-20. Maria Lukin was a pseudonym used by Goeritz for several publications.

course, to *el eco*. They developed a close relationship, which had begun by mail correspondence in 1950, when Goeritz exhibited his work in Guadalajara and had invited Moore to attend. Unfortunately, Moore could not travel then but wrote an affectionate thank you letter to Goeritz.[138] The exhibit that Goeritz organized, at *Arquitectura, AC,* Guadalajara, was devoted to Henry Moore's drawings, and was the first exhibit for Moore in México. Goeritz published a catalogue and included Moore's note. These publications had a twofold effect: legitimizing him within Mexican artistic circles as someone with international connections, and expanding his transnational network of artists and critics.

At *el eco,* Moore redesigned the mural respecting the lines drawn by Tamayo.[139] The graphic style is consistent with Moore's figurative drawings based on his experiences of sketching during the London Blitz in World War II. Goeritz sculpted an organically-shaped wood sculpture, related in shape to the drawn figures in the mural, which was placed in front of the large drawings. He wanted the entrance experience to culminate with the "cry" of the sculpture "echoed" by the expressive elements of the mural.[140]

As mentioned before, *el eco* was built without architectural plans and developed from a series of conceptually drawn plans into a monumental, sculptural environment (Figure 9). These drawings present various areas of the museum and the sculptural

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[138] Letter at the *Fondo Mathias Goeritz*, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

[139] Paul F. Damaz, "Experimental Architecture: The Emotional Architecture of Mathias Goeritz," in *Art in Latin American Architecture* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1963), 222.

[140] Olivia Zúñiga, *Mathias Goeritz* (Ciudad de México: Editorial Intercontinental, 1963), 31.

elements that would-be part of the overall work. As stated by author Clive Bamford Smith "It was all done on the spot, without exact plans. Mason, painter, sculptor, architect was one person."[141] The walls varied by height from 20 to 36 feet. The slight asymmetry achieved by nearly a complete lack of 90-degree angles was intended to heighten the emotional impact.

An outsized window-door led from the interior room to the cloister-like patio. The blown-up scale of the window added an additional element of shock as the viewer walked through one of the lower sections of the window. The oversize doorframe was a simplification of the cross motif that imbued the space with an air of religiosity. The adjoining patio was meant to function as a calm area in contrast to the previous spatial experiences. The high-walled patio was intended to be used for outdoor exhibitions and dance presentations. The two large-scale sculptures in the patio were planned to arouse contrasting emotions of optimism and anxiety. One of the two works is a 37-foot high yellow tower that still dominates the patio with its almost triangular shape. The color symbolizes a ray of bright sunshine entering the gray, black and white setting. The soaring yellow tower, 37-foot high, was the only structure that employed color in the whole building. Goeritz limited the color palette to white, gray and black. He named the yellow tower a *Poema Plástico* (Figure 10). The tower has on one side, an unintelligible text, evocative of cuneiform hieroglyphs. The *Poema Plástico*, functions as a bas-relief

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[141] Clive Bamford Smith, *Builders in the Sun: Five Mexican Architects* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., Inc, 1967), 135.

sculpture that prefigures Goeritz's later experiments of concrete poetry, and it is a good example of Goeritz's early explorations of the visual effect(s) of graphic work in a specific space. *Poema Plástico* mimics the ordinary structure of language: it is divided into lines or stanzas, with some elements of punctuation, and maintains a relational syntax between the "word-elements," yet was subdivided into the sculptural, pictorial, and emotional registers.[142] But it is, in the end, undecipherable nonsense without any semantic meaning. According to Goeritz, the *Poema Plástico* was "a visual composition of abstract typography [that addressed] itself solely to the sensitiveness of the spectator."[143] Additionally, the architectural placement of the poem addressed the possibility of its collective reception because the placement could be seen from the entry hallway. Goeritz transformed the spectator into a reader. In the act of pronouncing the information inscribed on the wall, the viewing relationship becomes a performative-reader relationship. Its cuneiform lettering confronts the reader with something unreadable that can only be intuited.

Goeritz developed the concept of visual impact through the qualities of calligraphy and of the vision of an idea. The lettering, made of steel and placed against a tall yellow wall, is an expression of a message that converts the text into a graphic landscape. Here, Goeritz was more interested in the connection of both art forms in an

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[142] Interview with Mathias Goeritz, Excélsior, August 23, 1957, quoted in Kassner, Mathias Goeritz, 83.

[143] Quoted in Paul F. Damaz, *Art in Latin American Architecture* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1963), 222

intermedial space. Intermedial work tends to blur the distinctions between different media, as visual poetry blurs the distinction between art and text; a preoccupation that he shared with the Fluxus art movement.

The free-standing wall, which Goeritz situated on one side of the patio far from the wall, as sculptural element, *Poema Plástico*, might have had its origins in Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion, but at *el eco*, it was, according to Keith Eggener "the first instance of its use in México."[144] The free-standing wall as sculptural element is later used by Luis Barragán in 1958 at *Las Arboledas* project and in 1976 at *Casa Gilardi*.

The second large sculpture—the black, metal *Serpent* —symbolizes the anguish of man in the universe (Figure 11). Goeritz included this aggressive sculpture in opposition to the restfulness of the *Poema Plástico*. As he wrote in 1970: "I wanted to provoke a sense of tension or emotion in the viewer… (I) wanted a sculptural element in the patio that offset its visual solemnity."[145] This piece was the culmination of the sculptural series of animals made by Goeritz upon his arrival from Spain to Guadalajara in 1949. The series developed from wooden forms that he did with maestro Romualdo de la Cruz in a small scale.[146] Barragán saw them at Goeritz's studio and commissioned him to do a larger one to be installed at the entrance of the urban neighborhood, *Jardines del*

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144 Keith L. Eggener, "Expressionism and Emotional Architecture in México: Luis Barragán's Collaborations with Max Cetto and Mathias Goeritz," *Journal of the History of Architecture* (January 1995):90.

145 Mathias Goeritz, "The Sculpture 'The serpent of El eco': A Primary Structure of 1953," *Leonardo, International Journal of the Contemporary Artists*, Oxford, vol. 3 (January 1970): 63.

146 Mathias Goeritz, "Advertencia: Homenaje a Romualdo," *Arquitectura/México*, núm. 89 (marzo, 1965): 38.

Pedregal. The sculpture was named *Animal del Pedregal* (1951) and was prominently showcased in all the marketing campaigns for the sale of the lots. The work was inspired by the artist visit, in 1949, to the archeological sites of Teotihuacán and Tenayuca, whose pyramid is encircled by a wall of 138 sculptures of rattlesnakes (Figure 12).

According to art historian Ida Rodríguez Prampolini,

> The symbol of the *Serpent* entranced him, not only as that of biblical temptation but also as the representation in México of *Quetzalcoatl*, the feathered serpent. *Quetzalcoatl* is the sun, the civilized creator of agriculture, the sciences, human and natural knowledge, the one who brings order to chaos, who escapes and then returns.[147]

Goeritz spent a great deal of time working out the visual problems of the *Serpent* and made 15 designs and seven small scale models in wood with his assistant, Romualdo de la Cruz, the man, who taught him how to sculpt in wood. The criteria for the work were numerous: it had to be serpentine, have sharp angles, be economical to construct, and have openings large enough to invite physical interaction. The simplified forms were a result of both need for economy and emphasis on the evocation of a mood. It has been called a precursor to Minimal Art, although Goeritz was very specific about his expressive intentions.[148] The large-scale work, 30-feet long and 15-feet high, was constructed of low-cost metal. Sheets of metal were welded together over an iron beam skeleton. He enlarged the size of the piece during construction, an example of his working out problems throughout the execution of a work. Because of the size of *Serpent*

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[147] Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, "Mexican influences on the art of Mathias Goeritz," in *Artes de México*, 116 (March 2015): 70.

[148] Gregory Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art: A critical Anthology* (New York: E.P. Dutton, Inc., 1968), 19-20.

and *Poema Plástico,* these devices denied references to human scale, in favor of their phenomenological experience.

Theory of phenomenology provides the language to understand the essence of how our bodies engage in perception through lived experiences. Maurice Merleau-Ponty highlighted the role of the body as the very starting point and anchor of perceptual experience.[149] His philosophy shifted our understanding of existence, from one of problematic body-mind dualism to one of lived experience through bodily perceptions. The goal of phenomenology is to understand the importance of a bodily-lived experience, where the body itself is explored as the detail that connects us with this world and the architecture within it. The architectural, sculptural, and painted forms within *el eco* were designed to have an emotional impact on the viewer. The various parts of the building—the evocatively simple exterior, the distorted perspective of the entrance corridor and the cloister-like patio—were each designed to trigger, from the visitor, a specific emotion.

The *Serpent* or Primary Structure, as Goeritz termed it, would provide some scale to the patio and serve as a frame for the ballet that would be performed there. The *Serpent* led to many broad reflections and, like other elements of the museum, would become part of the country's modernist legacy. In fact, years later, the *Serpent* structure would be adopted as the logo of México City's *Museo de Arte Moderno* (Modern Art Museum).[150]

[149] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

[150] México City's Museo de Arte Moderno was inaugurated in 1964.

For *el eco* opening night, Goeritz organized a "happening"[151] that anticipated by almost a decade performance art of the 1960s in the United States.[152] It was an experimental ballet by Walter Nicks,[153] set around Goeritz's serpent sculpture in the patio, and choreographed by the surrealist filmmaker Luis Buñuel.[154] The choreography was meant to imitate the angular forms of the sculpture. The dancers were all African-Americans who interacted with the sculpture, the public, and the architecture of the place. This performance, which amazed many of the opening- night guests (because of the interactive aspect of the work and the unusual context of performance), was repeated many times during the two months of operation of the museum. A few days before the opening, Goeritz had said, "We do not exhibit paintings but artists."[155] Theater and performing arts groups held privileged positions there. In its first year, as artists experimented in the building, the museum was open to the public so that

[151] The first documented *Happening* by the artists occurred in the city of Guadalajara in 1950.

[152] Louise Pelletier, "Modeling the Void: Mathias Goeritz and the Architecture of Emotions," *Journal of Architectural Education* 62, (2008): 6–13. Also, Richard Ingersoll, "A la sombra de Barragán," in *Luis* Barragán*: la revolución callada, e*d. Federico Zanco (Valencia: Institut Valenciá d'Art Modern, 2001), 223.

[153] Walter Nick (1925–2007) was an African American dancer and choreographer from New York who formed his company called ''El Ballet Negro'' in 1953 and who performed extensively in México and throughout the world.

[154] Luis Buñuel was a world renowned Surrealist Spanish filmmaker who worked in Spain, France and México.

[155] Zúñiga, *Mathias Goeritz*, 30.

all could witness the process of creation.[156] Goeritz did not think of *el eco* as storage for artworks but rather as a place in constant transformation.

The ephemeral was an integral part of the concept of *el eco.* With this project, as stated by Alma Ruiz, "Goeritz tried to accomplish in México City in the early 1950s what museums around the world began to do in the 1980s."[157] Goeritz stated, "I came to the conclusion, after considerable meditation, that the building should be a living institution, a place where anyone who felt an urge to carry out a daring art project could do so, an idea that I had been dreaming of for several years."[158] In Goeritz's museum, one art form was 'echoed' in another, and the past 'echoed' in the present, as Goeritz explained in a 1953 interview, "the name *el eco* was born when I was looking at a painting by Brueghel titled *Ecce Homo*. I made an association of e*cco* that in Italian translates to *voila* and I found interesting the double significance of the sound."[159]

According to a contemporary review of the building by the cultural critic Anita Brenner, the building's effect was "achieved primarily with space and light, so photographs don't convey it very well. One must be in it."[160] In this sense, as Adolf Loos

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[156] His dream of creating a school where all artists are free to create came to fruition at Escuela de Altamira and then at *El eco*, where all artists could express themselves in other disciplines. Both projects were very short lived, but they remain referents even 60 years after closing. At the Escuela de Altamira artistic freedom and non-ideological art were vital conceptions, ideas that would later resonate in Goeritz's work.

[157] John Alan Farmer, "The Experimental Exercise of Freedom: A Conversation with Rina Carvajal and Alma Ruiz," *Art Journal* 59, 1 (Spring 2000): 23.

[158] Mathias Goeritz," The Sculpture the Serpent of *El eco*: A Primary Structure of 1953," *Leonardo*, Vol. 3, Pergamon Press (1970): 63-65.

[159] Goeritz in interview with Ana Cecilia Trevino, "Desinterés por todo: solo importa el hombre," *Excélsior*, sección C, Sociedad y eventos varios, 23 de agosto de 1953, 1 and 14.

used to say of good architecture, "the photographic representation of the building, its abstraction into two dimensions, was impossible."[161] After all, how does one convey the sensation that is evoked by the form and three-dimensional space?

A MEXICAN GESAMTKUNSTWERK

El eco served as Goeritz's *Gesamtkunstwerk,* (an all-inclusive art work), and was meant to function as a site for artists, writers, musicians and dancers to experiment and exhibit their newest creative ideas, much like Hugo Ball's *Cabaret Voltaire*, or what Walter Gropius described in 1919 as "the final goal of art: the creative conception of the cathedral of the future, which will once again be all in one shape, architecture and sculpture and painting." [162] Goeritz elaborated on this in one of his opinions at *Arquitectura/ México*:

> I firmly believed that we must rectify all established values, if we want to reach a new and important art. I still live with the illusion of Major art. An art far from egocentrically small individual ambition. Even if the word sounds pedant, I still believe on *Gesamtkunstwerk.* There is only one way to arrive to Major art: establishing God rights! Since any other way would conduct to the attitude of the skeptic of not belief, of not wishing anything, of not wanted to do anything. I wish that I have the fortitude of never falling into that void that I see very close. [163]

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[160] Anita Brenner, "Summer in México," Art News (June 1954): 67.

[161] For Loos, what were central to the understanding of architecture were its inhabitation and the experiential occupation of space. Adolf Loos, "Architecture (1910)," in *The Architecture of Adolf Loos*, ed. Yehuda Safran and Wilfred Wang (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1985), 106.

[162] Ulrich Conrads, Programs and Manifestos on 20th Century Architecture (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1975), 46.

[163] Mathias Goeritz, "Confesión," *Arquitectura/México*, Sección de Arte, núm. 7 (July 1960).

The notion of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (an all-inclusive art work), in Goeritz's work has not received enough study. Emphasis has been given to the Café Voltaire and to Walter Gropius's practices at the Bauhaus. However, my research reveals a strong link to Richard Wagner who coined the term in 1848. The concept was developed by Wagner in his two early writings, *The Art-Work of the Future* and *Art and Revolution*, both published in 1849—in the aftermath of the 1848 revolutions that spread from France to Western Europe. If the total work of art is usually understood as the intention to reunite the arts into the one integrated work, it is tied from the beginning to the desire to recover and renew the public function of art. The synthesis of the arts in the service of social and cultural regenerations was a particularly German dream. Goeritz, a scholar of German history, appreciated and valued this concept.

The total work of art as envisioned and executed by Goeritz is unique in México. The closest concept to total work of art is what in México is called *Integración Plástica* (artistic integration). According to Goeritz, the model of the integration of the arts in architecture is the now extinct *Multifamiliar Juarez* buildings designed by Mario Pani.[164] Goeritz wrote about the success of Carlos Mérida's work in the integration of the arts and the architectural designs of Mario Pani in his first article at *Arquitectura/México* magazine.[165] The buildings sought to embody the communion of the arts. The complex

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[164] The buildings must be demolished after the strong 1985 earthquake.

[165] Mathias Goeritz, "La integración plástica en el centro Urbano Presidente Juárez," in *Arquitectura/México*, núm. 40 (diciembre de 1952): 419-425.

managed to create an urban space that thoroughly represented the aim of designing an architectural organism in perfect symbiosis with the visual arts. Goeritz believed in the integration of the arts with architecture and design, which for him indicated a new paradigm for art.

From Goeritz's point of view, the main quality of the reliefs of Carlos Mérida established a relationship between the public and the work of art, and the artistic integration in Mexican architecture and architecture itself as a symbol of modernity. But artistic integration refers, in México at this point and for the most part, to mural paintings in building. For Goeritz and other Europeans, a total work of art included the performative arts as well.

There is also the case of David Alfaro Siqueiros and his interest for artistic integration, for example at C.U., where according to James Oles, "Murals by Siqueiros and Chavez Morado resemble drive-in theater screens, projecting easily legible and nationalistic messages that celebrate the "new Mexicans" being trained at the Ciudad Universitaria."[166] According to scholar Luis E. Carranza, Siqueiros's *Ejercicio Plástico* of 1933 done in Argentina, is a better example of artistic integration between architecture and painting.[167] Indeed, Siqueiros preferred industrial materials and emphasized the dynamism of modernity. Juan O'Gorman relied on local materials and sought to employ realism to accentuate a connection with tradition.

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[166] James Oles, Art *and Architecture in México* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013), 322.

[167] Luis E. Carranza and Fernando Luiz Lara, *Modern architecture in Latin America: Art, Technology, and Utopia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 27.

In the *Total Work of Art in European Modernism,* author David Roberts[168] shares, "Wagner fuses the idea of the French revolutionary festival and the German idea of tragedy in the artwork of the future, which exemplifies at the same time on the level of form the redemptive return to unity, for it is only in the drama that the individual arts can unfold their highest potential." Roberts identifies the total work of art as the site of convergence of the two lineages. The tensions between these lineages are less significant than the shared origin in the loss of religious legitimation. The total work of art emerged from the fact that politics and art in the modern sense, Robert says, "laid claim to the inheritance of religion."[169]

The project of the early twentieth-century avant-garde movements (Futurism, Dada, Surrealism, Constructivism etc.) has often been interpreted as an attack on autonomous art with the aim of creating a new integration of art and life. The attack on aesthetically-differentiated art is crucial for the avant-garde, but in Roberts's view, too much focus on this iconoclastic aspect has resulted in a one-sided account of avant-gardism that ignores the complementary aspects of iconoclastic or "analytic" tendencies with "synthetic" tendencies. The projections of utopian fantasies of social regeneration develop directly from the Wagnerian lineage of the total work of art as religion. Roberts points to the mystical architecture and urban planning of the early Bauhaus and Bruno Taut, and to the beginnings of abstraction in the *Blaue Reiter* group, whose founders,

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[168] David Roberts, *The Total Work of Art in European Modernism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 28.

[169] Ibid, 30.

Wassily Kandinksy and Franz Marc, declare themselves in 1912 to be "standing on the threshold of one of the greatest epochs that mankind has ever experienced, the epoch of great spirituality."[170] Kandinsky articulates a vision of the "theatre of the future … as herald and token of a new organic age."[171] The breakthrough to abstraction in painting or to atonality in music in the years immediately preceding World War I proceed from Kandinsky to Mondrian and the De Stijl movement, where the reduction of the arts to their essential elements is conceived as the means to their fusion in a new aesthetically-determined urban space. The new art becomes the means to a new life, heralding the importance of spiritual philosophical traditions in the "total work" and its integration into the public sphere.

The centrality of the spiritual in Goeritz's work came from the incorporation of ideas that evolved from his German Expressionist heritage and his admiration for the German branch of Dada. Goeritz has also mentioned his debt to German Expressionist film sets, like that for Robert Wiene's 1920 classic film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari.*[172] Expressionist artists commit themselves to impulses, resulting in the desire to express emotion through extreme visuals. Aesthetic value is often exchanged for emotional power, and though expressionist artwork may not be the most pleasing to the eye, it

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[170] Kandinsky, *Complete Writings on Art*, edited by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1982), 207.

[171] Ibid, 219.

[172] *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* is a German film from 1920, directed by Robert Wiene and written by Hans Janowitz and Carl Mayer, both of whom emerged from World War I strongly embittered against the wartime government.

nonetheless elicits an emotional response from its viewer. This is achieved in *Caligari* through its unique set design. Goeritz borrowed the concept of exaggeration of large and small spaces, which served him well on the design and construction of *el eco* building.

By looking at images of both *el eco* and the *Caligari* set, we can infer that they were designed for theatrical purposes. Art history scholar, Keith L. Eggener concurs and offers that "on this point alone they could be compared at length. Spatial compression was created through subdued lighting, thick walls, low ceilings, oblique angles, and narrow, tapered passages leading into more open areas." [173] Right angles and symmetry are generally avoided, and lines appear bent or fractured. Dancers lurk in *el eco's* shadows, beneath Henry Moore's glowing figures.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari depiction of modern anguish suggests an expressionist atmosphere defined by the contrast of its urban and rural landscape blended in irregular, chiaroscuro shapes that express the tension between a traditional world and one consumed by a psychiatric perversion personified by Caligari. While imagining a sleepwalker induced to commit crimes, the screenwriters were denouncing the German State's acts during the war.

For Goeritz 1984 exhibition catalogue of a Museum of Modern Art, México City, art historian Rita Eder wrote about the connection of Goeritz's works to *Doctor Caligary*. Goeritz states, "I come from a *Doctor Caligari* tradition, from the movies of the twenties,

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[173] Keith L Eggener, "Expressionism and Emotional Architecture in México: Luis Barragán's Collaborations with Max Cetto and Mathias Goeritz," *Journal of the History of Architecture* (January 1995):90.

and Rita Eder is right, because I drew my Expressionism from there."[174] Goeritz's *el eco*, was one of the most significant attempts in México to shake up the cultural scene of the day by proposing a museum that would not preserve or collect objects, but experiences derived from situations that took place there.

READINGS OF MUSEO EXPERIMENTAL: EL ECO (1953)

> The spiritual emotion that the work [of art] engenders in the spectator and which he in turn directs back to the work is what gives it such an increased value over and above the purely artistic. It is what makes all great art and all genuinely religious art a collective art, and which the artist of our day will not be able to achieve so long as his production continues to be directed to an exclusive coterie of connoisseurs and intimates for whom the "esthetic" emotion represents an escape from the vulgarity of daily life. - Paul Westheim, *The Art of Ancient México* (1950). [175]

The main critical readings of *Museo Experimental el eco* propose it as a late expressionist experiment by Ferruccio Asta,[176] an anomalous anticipation of Minimal art, by Federico Morais,[177] a homage to Zurich's Hugo Ball's *Cabaret Voltaire*, by Rita Eder,[178] or a cave of Altamira for the new modern primitive man by Ida Rodríguez

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[174] Interview recorded by Enrique X de Anda, July 2 1987, in Enrique X de Anda Alanis, "La arquitectura emocional," in *Los Ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y Testimonios*, eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), 95.

[175] Paul Westheim, *The Art of Ancient México*, trans. Ursula Bernard (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1965), 40-41 (first published in 1950 as *Arte Antiguo de México*).

[176] Ferruccio Asta, *La ética del expresionismo*, in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz*…, 25-37.

[177] Federico Morais, *Mathias Goeriz* (Ciudad de México: UNAM, 1982), 34-35, where he comments about the references that Gregory Battcock wrote about Goeritz's work like "no valid antecedent of Minimalism" in *Minimal Art. A Critical Anthology*, New York: Dutton, 1968.

[178] Rita Eder, *Ma Go: visión y memoria*, in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz…*, 37-47.

Prampolini.[179] These interpretations insist on the recognition of this building as international art. Surprisingly enough, of all the critical attention that Mathias Goeritz's *el eco* has received, only Ida Rodríguez Prampolini[180] recognized the importance of Paul Westheim's[181] writings on Goeritz's artistic development. My intention is to read *el eco* using Westheim and his Professor Wilhelm Worringer's ideas. Worringer was a German art historian interested in expressionism and the relationship between abstraction and empathy, which in his vocabulary is also the tension between "primitive" and "modern" forms. In this section I argue that the goal of the design and construction of *el eco* was to create an emotion and to articulate the spiritual function of art. Goeritz stated that as Egyptian pyramids, Greek temples, Roman or Gothic cathedrals, and Baroque palaces invoked powerful emotions, modern architecture must strive for the same effect.

Art historian Rodríguez Prampolini shares that Goeritz had a deep knowledge of a book written by a disciple of German art historian Wilhelm Worringer, the German expatriate to México's Paul Westheim. *Arte antiguo de México*, published in 1950 by Westheim in Spanish (*The Art of Ancient México* in the 1965 English version), was a book that Goeritz studied carefully. Westheim meant to propose an aesthetic of Mexican

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[179] Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, *El arte contemporáneo: Esplendor y agonía* (Ciudad de México: Pomaca, 1964).

[180] Ida Rodríguez Prampolini. "Lo mexicano en la obra de Mathias Goeritz," in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz*…,183-195.

[181] Art critic, editor and author Westheim (1886—1963) was born in Germany and lived in México from 1941 until his death in 1963.

pre-Hispanic art which, according to him, had not yet been written, despite the abundance of descriptive and analytical texts published by archaeologists.

The book consists of three parts. The first part exposes the 'worldview' of pre-Hispanic cultures, predicated on four major characteristics: their Theogony systems; communal, non-Individualistic forms of artistic production; their multifaceted understanding of spirituality; and finally, their ideas about nature and natural forces. The second part focuses on "expression" across three themes: the aesthetics of the pyramid, the mask, and the stepped-fret.[182] The third part analyzes concrete cases in different cultural, regional and geographical areas of ancient México, such as the Teotihuacán, Toltec, Maya, Chichen Itza, Zapotec, Aztec, and Tarascan cultures.

All the walls at *el eco* have a rock-hard, rough, coarse finish, with the same quality of a pre-Hispanic site. The patio could be an interpretation of the pre-Hispanic system known as *talud-tablero* used in pre-Hispanic sites in central México.[183] At *el eco*, all the lines and angles in the building's walls aim to break with 90 degrees. In an article written by Goeritz, he expressed his interest in *el eco* irregular architectural shapes, and highlighted the following: "I tried to avoid 90-degree angles in the building's floor plan, to project a nearly imperceptible asymmetry like the one found in a face or any living soul." [184] Goeritz used the language of affect and the work of ancient cultures as

[182] Talud-tablero in Spanish.

[183] *Talud-tablero* or slope and panel is the construction pairing that creates distinct chiaroscuro progressions with sunlight, with two horizontal planes that cover the pyramid's base, where the lower plane, known as *talud*, rests with an inclination of nearly 45 degrees.

inspiration. He aimed to create an art "…just as alive, essential and human as the art of Altamira."[185] This taste for the primitive was something that Goeritz shared with earlier Expressionists. As the painter Emil Nolde had written some years before, "There is enough art around that is over-bred, pale, and decadent. This may be why young artists have taken their cues from the aborigines."[186]

The *Yellow Tower* with "no function" in *el eco* had a very clear function. Through the interpretive lens of Westheim, it was to facilitate the sentimental projection by the visitor into the empty space of the courtyard. Wilhelm Worringer's book published in 1908, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (Abstraction and Empathy), describes how some rows of columns, without any supporting function, were placed in front of Egyptian temples of antiquity, and he interprets this element to alleviate the agoraphobia or anxiety caused by emptiness. According to Worringer, those Egyptian columns were cultural residues of that phenomenon; offering spatial references to the eye, to generate a sense of orientation in the space.[187]

Therefore, according to Worringer's aesthetic system, abstraction is meant to produce sentimental projection, something Goeritz called "Emotional Architecture" in his

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[184] Mathias Goeritz, "La Serpiente de *El eco's* Sculpture: A Primary Structure of 1953," *Leonardo,* vol. 3, London, Pergamon Press (1970).

[185] Zuniga, *Mathias Goeritz* …, 24.

[186] Nolde's statement, written in 1909 and later published in *Jahre der Kampfe,* is translated and reprinted in Hershell B. Chipp ed., *Theories of Modern Art* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1968), 151.

[187] Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy:A Contribution to the Psychology of Style* (New York: Martino Fine Books, 2014) 30.

manifesto of 1954. The figure of the *Serpent* appears in the space as the primitive witness of that process. The architectural form of *el eco* eschews the right angle, symmetry, and static geometry and invites the actual movement of the spectator by using angular shapes in perspective. By means of formal abstraction, integrating the movement of the spectator, Goeritz achieves a mode of empathy that grants certain vitality to forms. This aesthetic stance was not ignored by the interpreters of Goeritz's work at the time, and was also cherished by Goeritz himself. Yet, Worringer and the many authors of German spatial aesthetics, who inspired Goeritz, are largely absent from critics' writings.

According to Mexican art historian Lily Kassner:

> *El eco* had internal dynamics, as if the architectural elements had acquired vitality, or the qualities of a living organism, for the disposal of its walls and compartments was radically arranged according to the dynamic principle of diagonals, avoiding the symmetrical and formal repetition by rejecting the conventional structure of straight construction.[188]

El eco was conceived as architecture/sculpture, and like the *Torres de Satélite* or (according to Goeritz) a Gothic cathedral, it did not compromise form for function. What fascinated Goeritz in art was the emotion it provoked:

> When you enter in a Gothic Cathedral, in Chartres on a Sunday morning, the candles glitter, the Sun pierces stain-glass and the organ plays. There is, indeed something more. There, you don't ask how the kitchen or the toilets work. There, you are overwhelmed. There is magnificence. There, everything functions together, the colors, the stain glasses. This is how I imagine good architecture.[189]

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[188] Lily Kassner, *Mathias Goeritz*…, 76.

[189] Mathias Goeritz, ''Le Peintre Architecte,'' in Leonor Cuahonte de Rodríguez, ed., *Mathias Goeritz (1915-1990): L'Art comme prière plastique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003), 119, author's translation.

Some of Goeritz's ideas were based on the theories of Wilhelm Worringer, whose concepts about abstraction and empathy were the cornerstone for many expressionist thinkers and artists. Goeritz encountered Worringen's ideas first as a doctoral student in Berlin in the 1930s, and later, through his fascination and study of Paul Westheim's 1950 book, *The Art of Ancient México*, which applied Worringen's concepts to pre-Hispanic art and architecture notions.

Worringen's 1908 book, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (Abstraction and Empathy), advanced that the form of certain historical structures could evoke strong emotions. Abstraction, on the other hand, was a result of humans' increasing understanding and rationalization of the world and the unexplainable characteristics of natural phenomena. As Worringer later wrote, Gothic space elicited emotions from its user because it was atmospheric and spiritual; it was meant to be experienced physically, rather than comprehended rationally. He wrote: "[This space] has an inner life which acts directly upon our senses, thereby offering a foothold for our powers of formation." Ultimately, Gothic space would lead to the "super-sensuous effect of mysticism or spiritualization."[190] Likewise, Goeritz believed that certain historic structures produced genuine emotions, in contrast to the way in which modern abstraction encouraged a purely rational perception of the world. In an interview before the opening of *el eco*, he made the connection with Worringer's ideas about the form of the Gothic by stating that: "In *el eco*, one will not find the human scale of the Greek temple but rather the emotional

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[190] Wilhelm Worringer, *Form in Gothic* (New York: Schocken Books, 1957), 158-59 (first published in German in 1911).

measure of Chartres Cathedral which has incredibly tall walls, no one knows why - perhaps because they represent a desire to reach God."[191] Goeritz wanted *el eco* to overwhelm both the senses and rational understanding and, thereby, to "offer a spiritual uplift."[192] Although his primary focus was on individual experience, the architectural scale of *el eco* suggests that he intended its experience and effects to be collective. This practice served him well for his stained-glass work at churches discussed in next chapter.

Goeritz's manifesto regarding emotions pointed to the ability of architecture to move the soul. This was not a new idea; already in the 18th century, this notion appeared in architectural discourse about architectural meaning in secular settings. Romanticism arose within the context of industrialization and *laissez-faire* capitalism. It too lamented the alienation of "man" from Nature and believed that the truth of Nature lay in art to be revealed by the artist. The context of German Idealism and the *Naturphilosophie* of Friedrich Schiller is a significant point of demarcation. Romanticism locates the "birth" of the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk,* in different art forms, all transgressing borders, and continuing through to the interactive media of our time.

In post-revolutionary México the promotion of a nationalistic ideology determined the formal narrative of artists. For Goeritz, the institutionalization of a political message in art and the demand for purely functional architecture were impediments to the transformation of society.

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[191] Mathias Goeritz, "Interview," *Excélsior,* August 23, 1957; quoted in Kassner, *Mathias Goeritz* …, 83.

[192] Goeritz, "Emotional Architecture Manifesto," …, 28.

ARTISTIC DEBATE

The inauguration of *el eco* revived old controversies between doctrinaire and liberal artists. Some artists, led by Siqueiros, attacked Goeritz's hedonism and called *el eco* a sinful place, describing it as "bourgeois, decadent, individualistic and dangerously foreign."[193] The Muralist painters had prevented Tamayo from completing the mural in the main room.[194] Tamayo had been at odds with the doctrinaire artists who criticized the Universalist symbolism in his work. Architect and art critic Mauricio Gomez Mayorga published in 1954 an article that gives his opinion on the mood of the time,

> To write these lines, I very deliberately used the title of a brilliant talk Mathias once gave in Guadalajara. My purpose here is to speak about an art center created and promoted by Goeritz. A great deal can be said about freedom of expression; grand ethical doctrines can be expounded on. Nevertheless, what must be said right now in México is much more important than what can be dealt with generally and in theory.
> When demagoguery, hiring and slogans make an artistic environment unbreathable; when the great original forces of creation and expression yield to convenience and opportunism, and those elements are used to prepare the set square that artistic production inevitably has to follow so that it agrees with a particular political 'ideology,' then the free man, the true artist, the impartial critic and the genuine observer yearn for rupture and liberation, and await a circumstance, group, magazine or movement to emerge that will throw doors and windows open and let fresh air, making life and expression possible again.
> Let's talk about an experimental museum, an "Art Cabaret." The impetuous David Alfaro Siqueiros-the only person worth anything in that bunch of traitors and piñatas, nevertheless-of course orders you to express disgust at the

[193] Anita Brenner, "Summer in México," *Art News*, LIII, 4 (June/July/August 1954): 59-67

[194] Ibid.

> mere mention of this artistic center *Museo Experimental: el eco*. And that painter, with a glibness that may be deceitful but is enviable nevertheless, cursed it from the pulpit: "School of Paris, imperialist abstractionism: neo-Porfirismo." He explained that it opened the way for the oil companies to return, along with the downfall of the agrarian reform movement.[195]

As mentioned before, Goeritz was seen as an invader of both the Mexican art space and the canonical national revolutionary identity as defended by the muralists. The ideology of the Mexican muralists was constructed on the left-revolutionary nationalist ideology between 1925 and 1940. Some historians extend that Mexican revolutionary process from 1910 to 1940. Lázaro Cardenas' presidential term (1934-1940) was a regime of state socialism with strong nationalist leanings, which emphasized production, domestic consumption, land expropriations, and the empowerment of the rural economy. The promotion of a nationalist ideology determined the formal narrative of artists in the post-revolutionary period and greatly constrained the identification of other artistic practices that were not part of the national canon.

The presidential terms that followed, that of Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946) and especially that of Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946-1952), witnessed the country's industrialization, its openness to international markets, and the beginning of profound changes in urban social behaviors and artistic openness.

The aesthetic debate that Goeritz's work raised is illustrated by the history of cultural arguments in México. Indeed, literary debates occurring in México in 1950-1968

[195] Gómez Mayorga, Mauricio, "Sobre la libertad de Creación," *Arquitectura/México*, núm. 45 (March 1954): 38-45.

were very similar to the artistic debates. From the end of the Mexican Revolution through most of the 20th century, constructions of *lo mexicano* alternated between a State-supported cultural nationalism and a critical cosmopolitanism embraced by many of the nation's intellectuals.[196]According to historian Deborah Cohn, "From the late 1940s through the late 1960s, a period that marked the height of national self-exploration in the form of the debate over *Mexicanidad,* the latter vision prevailed. A tightly-knit group of internationalist intellectuals dominated cultural production through popular and elite media."[197]Author and historian Rubén Gallo elaborates, "they were seeking to legitimate a cosmopolitan definition of Mexican culture."[198] The group of writers worked together at numerous periodicals and literary establishments during the 1950s and 1960s, often under the leadership of more established writers, most notably Fernando Benítez, Jaime García Terrés, and Octavio Paz.[199] Because the muralist movement had such giant,

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[196] Guillermo Sheridan, *México en 1932: la polémica nacionalista* (Ciudad de México: FCE, 1999), 85.

[197] Deborah Cohn, "The Mexican Intelligentsia, 1950–1968: Cosmopolitanism, National Identity, and the State." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 21, no. 1 (2005): 141-82. These fields correspond to what Bourdieu has labeled the "field of large-scale production," or "popular" culture and the "field of restricted production," or "high" culture, respectively. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production,* 39. It should be noted that, while the group's work appeared in media accessible to a public, it tended to focus more on "high" culture than on the "popular" culture that was quickly making inroads into Mexican culture during this period with the introduction of television, radio, film, etc. Carlos Monsiváis stands out as an exception to this trend, for he wrote about television and treated popular culture in general as a serious critical phenomenon.

[198] Rubén Gallo, *Mexican Modernity: The Avant-Garde and the Technological Revolution* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005), 55.

[199] Both Benitez (born in 1910) and Paz (born in 1914) were members of what Enrique Krauze calls the "generación de 1929." See "Cuatro estaciones de la cultura mexicana," in Enrique Krauze *Caras de la historia y la historia cuenta* and had already published widely and established their reputations by the time the younger writers were beginning their careers.

talented, and powerful figures, the consolidation of an international language in art would take longer than in other countries. By international language I mean a narrative far from national and regional descriptions. As Ariel Rodríguez Kuri stated, "There are two main issues of modern culture in México: on one side, the cultural and aesthetic heritage of the Baroque tradition and on the other, the difficulties on the reception and assimilation of the avant-garde in the 20th century."[200] The architects, on the other hand, who had become strong voices in México's art world, responded favorably to *el eco*. They interpreted it as a symbol of creative freedom, which had been an issue in México for decades. The art critic Anita Brenner writing for *Art News*, has summed up the emotional experience of *el eco*, "Coming through the iron entry, which pivots heavily and smoothly, is weirdly like leaving time behind, and entering a legendary world: something prehistoric, in which Negro ballet feels like voodoo, and djinns are invisible all over the place."[201] Author de Anda Alanís writes specifically regarding this issue and Goeritz's work,

> Goeritz, in fact, had an alternate project of modernity. Modernity understood not only as a plastic renewal within the discourse of styles, but congruent with the progress of social projects and with the desired creative freedom, seen not as an end but also as an instrument of support for the integration of personal ethics into the consciousness of the community ... The two modernity's (the one of Goeritz and the other, implanted in *Ciudad Universitaria*), damaged by their own

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[200] Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, "La proscripción del aura. Arquitectura y política en la restauración de la Catedral de México, 1967-1971," *Journal: Historia Mexicana,* vol. LVI, núm. 4 (2007): 1309-1391.

[201] Anita Brenner, "Summer in México," *Art News*, LIII, 4 (June/July/August 1954): 59.

> contradictions, marched together over time. None triumphed over the other; they coexisted, attacked and served to give birth to new life in contemporary Mexican culture.[202]

One of the principles of absolute modernity for Goeritz was strict non-representational subject matter: giving importance to the sensorial experience by de-emphasizing the visual sense. His experiences in Altamira, Spain, led him to write that ‘‘art is a basic human need; otherwise, we wouldn’t find it in every period of humanity.’’[203] Goeritz’s work exploited the power of Abstraction to translate his pictorial intentions directly into architecture; the language of light and color played a key role in his *oeuvre*.

Goeritz’s vision was for the *el eco* to function as a laboratory of ideas and practices. In that space, artists as diverse as Luis Buñuel, Henry Moore, Walter Nicks, Lan Adomian, German Cueto and Carlos Mérida, all foreign born, most of them exiled in México, and in the case of Cueto, first generation Mexican, were invited to break with functional and formal precedents. These artists, however different in their background and ultimate development, shared the experience of cultural dislocation and of the loss of a secured national identity (since they were actual immigrants and in Cueto’s case a child of immigrants). Music, film, dance, poetry, and performance were created by these artists specifically for the *el eco*.

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[202] Enrique Xavier de Anda Alanís, “La arquitectura emocional,” en *Una mirada a la arquitectura mexicana del Siglo XX* (Ciudad de México: CONACULTA, Col. Arte e Imagen, 2005), 119.

[203] Quoted by Leonor Cuahonte de Rodríguez, *Mathias Goeritz*, 38. All quotations from Leonor Cuahonte de Rodríguez are my translation.

Edward Said has described exile as 'the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home.' Yet, he goes on to suggest a singular and potentially positive aspect to *intellectual* exile: simultaneous identification with more than one culture can endow a writer or artist with an originality of vision which Said, also a music critic, characterizes as 'contrapuntal.'[204] Goeritz's exile in México embraced Said's contrapuntal concept, as he was able to make a reality many of his artistic dreams and his self-exile condition endow him with a charged originality vision. After all, we know that Goeritz rejected the notion that where one was born necessarily constitutes the self's true home and that he never wanted to live elsewhere but México.[205]

For Goeritz, the spiritual tradition that artists and intellectuals bear is cosmopolitan**.** Cosmopolitanism is the embrace of the possibility — utopian, perhaps — of the transcendence of national, racial, ethnic, or religious ties in favor of communities born of common beliefs, interests, skills, and tastes. The word "utopia" derives from two Greek words, *eutopos* and *outopos*, meaning "good place" and "no place," respectively. Utopian projects have reflected this ambiguity, representing visions of good and possibly attainable social systems and at other times, fantasies of a desirable but unattainable perfection, which is called a chimera. The American continent, in this context, has held

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[204] Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile," in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. Russell Ferguson (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 357.

[205] According to many counts and Ida Rodríguez testimony, Goeritz never wanted to return to live in Germany or Europe. He was happy in México and loved visiting New York City.

from its origin, in the eyes of the European, "the two basic ingredients of utopia—space and time: a territory where to settle and a history with a past to recuperate or a future where to project oneself with ease."[206] *Museo Experimental: el eco* is a space imbued by the two meanings of utopia. Goeritz's dream of creating a space where all artists were free to express themselves was very short lived, but the concept is still alive.

Goeritz applied his sculptural work methods and his interest in calibrating the temporal dimension of human experience to the conception of an entire building. In addition of being a spatial experiment of an interdisciplinary nature aimed at fusing the arts, *el eco* was meant to incorporate events of an ephemeral nature. During the early development of the project, Goeritz described his vision for the internal spaces in terms of ''large uninhabited and useless volumes of monastic austerity, created by inclined and asymmetrical surfaces." [207] Corridors would be more than transitional spaces; they would play a major role in the spatial hierarchy. Based on this vision of the prospective building, Goeritz produced a conceptual drawing that combined various architectural elements, suggesting paths, and progression through space, as well as contrast between a long contracting space and the expanding area of an open volume. In this drawing, artworks already inhabited the pictorial space, cutting across the convention of projections and perspective views. In the patio, the sculpture of a serpent, conceived as a stage set for dance performances, was the only element with a programmatic ''function.''

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[206] Quoted in Fernando Aínsa, *De la Edad de Oro a El Dorado-Génesis del discurso utópico americano* (Ciudad de México: Fondo de cultura económica, 1992), 10.

[207] Quoted by Leonor Cuahonte de Rodríguez, *Mathias Goeritz…*, 121.

Otherwise, *el eco* was inaugurated empty, for its true content was not meant to be material but immaterial, filled with life and human/artistic sensitivity. It was also meant to remain an ‘‘unfinished’’ project, constantly waiting for works to transform it. Thus, improvisation became a mode of artistic experimentation and a principle of construction.

Goeritz was interested in the energy that could be generated when artists were free to experiment and in creating a dynamic space where the public could participate in happenings. These aspects anticipated by many years the activities that have become standard in many contemporary spaces. The space was then not a receptacle for an art collection but rather the collective experience of artists and the public. There were performances, a bar, an art gallery, and a space where every artist could do something different from their usual disciplines. This ability to cross over different modes of artistic production refers to what Maurice Merleau-Ponty defined as the synesthetic primacy of perception. That good painters can be good sculptors or that musicians can successfully translate harmonies into a sculptural form is indicative of the overlaps of perception that Merleau-Ponty described as ‘‘the proof that there is a system of equivalences, a logo of the lines, of light, of relief, of masses, a presentation, without any concept of universal being.”[208]

To put Goeritz’s work into context, this chapter includes information of two artists who were working outside the social realism aesthetic, German Cueto and Carlos Mérida. These were also artists that Goeritz promoted through collaborations or through

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[208] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 182.

his writings in magazines such as *Arquitectura/México*, where Goeritz wrote about Mérida achievement in artistic integration. Non-figurative pioneers like Carlos Mérida and German Cueto, collaborated with Goeritz on *el eco* and their contributions are described in page six and seven of this chapter.

GERMAN CUETO (MÉXICO CITY, 1883 – 1975)

Like a cathedral builder, Goeritz invited other creators to join the project in order to broaden his exercise and not have complete control of the final result. He invited more experienced artists that he greatly admired, such as sculptor and painter Germán Cueto (1893-1975). The multifaceted sculptor was one of the founders of the avant-garde group *Los Estridentistas* (*Stridentism*), a radical aesthetic movement inspired by Cubism and Futurism. The S*tridentist* Movement (1922-26), was the closest, of all Mexican art movements, to European constructivism and futurism in its emphasis on the urban, the modern, and the industrial. Cueto moved to Paris in 1927, where he lived until 1932, forging links with the School of Paris, particularly the *Cercle et Carré* group. A 1930 exhibition held in Paris' *Gallery 23,* is notable as its unifying connections represent the rejection of figuration and the use of geometric forms. During this period, *Cercle et Carré* was made up of around 40 artists from different countries in Europe and America, including renowned names such as Hans Arp, Le Corbusier, Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian, Antoine Pevsner, Kurt Schwitters, Joaquín Torres García, and Georges Vantongerloo. Despite being a pioneer of modern sculpture in México and Latin America, Cueto did not achieve recognition during his lifetime. Upon his return to México in 1932, the abstraction of his works was deemed too innovative and far from the

dominant tastes of the country at that time. Cueto was unable to maintain a prominent position in the artistic scene, then dominated by muralists such as Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. Throughout this period, he survived by teaching, while at the same time dedicating his time to artistic exploration.

CARLOS MÉRIDA (GUATEMALA, 1891 – MÉXICO, DF, 1985)

Another artist who collaborated with Goeritz for *el eco* was Carlos Mérida.[209] He is considered one of the first artists that fused European Modern painting and pre-Hispanic cultures imagery; favoring a non-figurative and later geometric style rather than a figurative, narrative style. Goeritz penned an essay titled "Carlos Mérida," for the exhibition catalogue of Mérida's 1963 solo exhibit at Museo de Ciencias y Arte.[210]

After two years in Paris, Mérida returned home and began, along with several other Guatemalan artists, a search for a nationalist artistic expression that would include his own Maya-Quiche roots. Central themes became the Maya (stylized and realistic), as well as Guatemala's rural landscapes. In 1919, he married Dalila Gálvez, and the couple headed to México, where art was flourishing in the post-revolutionary period. There the young artist collaborated with the muralists Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros, but later returned to abstract works with indigenous elements. He produced numerous public and private works in both countries. Although he made frequent visits to

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[209] Mérida lived for several years in Paris. He moved to México in the 1920s and died there. He is considered one of the first artists that fused European Modern painting to Latin American themes; favoring a non-figurative and later geometric style rather than a figurative, narrative style.

[210] Mathias Goeritz, "Carlos Mérida," *El diseño, la composición y la integración plástica de Carlos Mérida* (Ciudad de México, DF: UNAM, 1963), 7.

Guatemala, Mérida and his wife remained in México almost continuously until his death in 1984.

CONCLUSION

Daniel Mont died suddenly from a heart attack on October 25, 1953, and the financing of the exhibition project was compromised. Mont never saw Henry Moore's project finished after the pre-opening in September 1953. *El eco*, as conceived by Goeritz, closed in November 1953.

Art historian Chus Tudelilla writes, "It re-opened as a restaurant with an art gallery on February 18, 1955*."*[211] Only the small space on the top floor functioned as a gallery, though only for a very short time. Upon closing in late 1953 the building endured years of neglect. It became a restaurant and cabaret. Later, it was rented by UNAM and housed the *Centro Universitario de Teatro* (CUT, University Theatre Center). Finally, in the late nineties, the place fell into disrepair. In all those years, Goeritz could never do anything for *el eco*. In 2004, on the verge of being demolished by its latest owners, the property was bought by UNAM and restored to its original conception. In September 7th 2005, after fifty-two years of closure as museum, *el eco* re-opened as *Museo Experimental: el eco*, with the original intention of its creator – as a space that would resonate with the expression of the artists of its time. *El eco* exhibitions space continues to be used by many national and international artists.

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[211] Chus Tudelilla, *Mathias Goeritz, Recuerdos de España 1940-1953* (Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2014), 341.

In this chapter I have written about Goeritz's *Museo Experimental: el eco,* a space that was conceived to resonate spiritually and emotionally on artists and viewers. The space was created as a work of art with the idea to provoke the user to react emotionally. The building has an inclusive modern architectural language with the ability to withstand time. Proof of that is that the space continues to be used by Mexican and international multidisciplinary artists.[212]

More importantly, *el eco* served as a springboard for Goeritz's later works, to be discussed in next chapter. *El eco* presages the subsequent developments in Goeritz's work as it addresses not only the spatial-phenomenological experiences found later throughout his works but also as it begins explorations on concrete poetry, monochromes, and an intense exploration with the structure of the tower. Experimentation with the effects of light started at *el eco,* and it will come to fruction with Goeritz's stained-glass windows. For example, at *Convento de las Capuchinas,* the light coming from floor-to-ceiling windows bathed the main space with a special glow.

[212] *Museo Experimental: El eco*, as previously stated, was meticulously restored by UNAM who manages it as a contemporary museum space.

Chapter III. Art Interventions in Catholic Spaces and *Mensaje Series*

Beginning in 1954, Goeritz created an unprecedented body of work, both in style and conceptual terms: stained-glass windows and works of art for a convent, several colonial churches in México City, and one in Cuernavaca, Morelos. They were unprecedented because the stained-glass works were nonrepresentational, installed in places of worship where stained-glass works have always used figuration. At the invitation of renowned architects, most notably Ricardo de Robina and Luis Barragán, Goeritz participated in the renovation or construction of several churches. Goeritz worked closely with five churches and one convent. The Catholic churches, all located in México City, are: *San Lorenzo Diácono y Mártir, Parroquia de Santiago Tlatelolco, Parroquia de los Santos Apóstoles Felipe y Santiago Azcapotzalco*, and the México City Cathedral known as *La Catedral Metropolitana*. The only convent corresponds to the Capuchin sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary, (*Capuchinas Sacramentarias del Purísimo Corazón de Maria*). Lastly, the Cuernavaca Cathedral, located in the state of Morelos.

In this chapter, I investigate how Goeritz, in-situ works in religious spaces, accomplished a significant body of work that allowed him to further his artistic practice. This execution is even more striking considering Goeritz's foreign and ambivalent religious status in a catholic country. At mid last century, the representation of art, in the western world, with a religious connotation, was probably the weakest it has ever been.[213]

[213] The example of Matisse is the most relevant one. The French artists created, between 1949 and 1951, stained-glass designs for the Chapel of the Rosary in Vence France. The stained-glass works were figurative.

After all, the historically most prominent art Maecenas, State and Royal Houses, where affected by two World Wars. The chapter also goes in depth to investigate the contradictions of the *Mensajes Series*. The series started as a mea-culpa work after the death of Goeritz's first wife. Then they get transformed as the right artwork to be displayed at modern México houses. The series was also part of the international renaissance of monochromatic works of the 1950s.

Ida Rodríguez Prampolini's recollections, written shortly after Goeritz's death, illustrate the importance of religion on the artist. Goeritz "…could be an absolutely rational man, and at the same time almost paradigmatically irrational, and deeply religious, although for none of the established religions, even Protestantism the one in which he was raised in had ever convinced him." She continues: "Years later he created a work, a self-portrait, the great sculpture *the preacher in the desert*, and in 1954 appeared his sculpture *The Prophet* [...], a constant that 'ruled' his life was his deep religious conviction."[214] Both works titles could reference one of Goeritz's capacities, the ability to articulate his ideas and philosophies. The titles can also indicate his personal messages, which is of being a preacher and a prophet. Indeed, Goeritz used his pedagogy to preach about his work and thought of himself very highly. *Preacher in the desert* can also be referred to spiritual experiences in a desert, known as the proverbial place to have them.

[214] Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, "Mathias Goeritz: De la materia hacia Dios," *Nacional Dominical*, núm. 16, 9 de septiembre de 1990.

Goeritz's closeness to his religious principles contrasted to most of the artists working as muralist, in 1950s México, who boasted of a militant atheism.[215] I will elaborate on this later in this chapter. Furthermore, one can comprehend a spiritual dimension in a multitude of ways, each unique to a cultural, ethnic, secular or religious lens. Allowing for various and simultaneous perspectives has always been and remains a source of grave human conflict, one source of which is the confusion between the meanings of spirituality and religion. Generally, religion refers to organized religion, but religion can also be defined more broadly as involvement with the ultimate or transcendence in art, law, science and in manifestations of social justice in society. The advantage of this view is that involvement with transcendence is not connected immediately with a specific organized religion but be existing. According to Goeritz, the environment that he created at churches, with stained-glass work, is an experience. He uses the language of religion for this, when he speaks of 'religious experience', 'miracle', and 'revelation.'[216] Although his primary focus was on individual experience, the architectural scale of the churches suggests that he intended its experience and effects to be collective. Indeed, Goeritz thought about the collective effect when working on church interventions, as discussed in this chapter. Goeritz's stained-glass windows (which he referred to as "monochromes"), simultaneously affect the experience of the space and alter its occupier. The environment created by Goeritz's choice of glass color has a

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[215] Horacio Legras, "The Mexican Revolution and the Plastic Arts," in *A Companion to Latin American Literature and Culture*, ed. Sara Castro-Klaren (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 386.

[216] Mathias Goeritz, "Aclaración," *Arquitectura/México*, núm. 78, México (junio de 1962): 122.

phenomenological effect on the visitor. In one of Goeritz's first published articles in an international magazine, the Buenos Aires-based *Sur,* the artist elaborates on his beliefs: "Being an artist more than a critic, I have to confess, that for me it matters more the feeling that I perceive of a work of art (as an artistic expression of another human being); than the intellectual analysis, that is to say: I care about ART, and less about the adjective." [217] In the same article he continues, "As far as my own work is concerned, I aspire that what is outwardly "representative" loses its importance over time, and becomes an interior expression of what it is to be human." [218] In this article, Goeritz reiterates the importance of emotions and human connection to art two years before his manifesto of emotional architecture, which I covered at length in Chapter II.

HISTORICAL RELIGION BACKGROUND

The 1950s marked the revival of Mexican Catholicism. From Mid-twentieth century relations between the state and the Church were harmonious and characterized by close collaboration, an unexpected development given the separation between Church and State preceding this period. In the first half of the twentieth century, the destruction of Church power and influence had been a priority for the revolutionary elite. For this group, the Catholic Church symbolized the *ancien regime*, and they believed that its

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[217] *Sur* (South) was one of the principal Argentinean literary magazines, founded and financed by Victoria Ocampo (1890-1979). The magazine was published from 1931 to 1988, although without regularity.

[218] Mathias Goeritz, "¿Arte abstracto o arte no figurativo?: [Prefiero el término "arte abstracto" como término generalizador y ya]." *Sur* (Buenos Aires), no. 209-210 (March-April 1952): 159–160. This is a response to a survey sent out by the magazine. It proves the debate at that time regarding abstract art, not only in México but throughout Latin America.

social influence was synonymous with obscurantism and ignorance and that from the pulpit, in the classroom, and in confessionals, priests took control of the minds and hearts of children and women. Therefore, the 1917 revolutionary legislation sought to destroy the foundation of ecclesiastical power, denying juridical status to churches in general, and excluding the clergy from educational activities.[219]

The conflict between the Church and the revolutionary state led to a bloody war that lasted three years, *la Cristiada* (1926-29), in which almost 50,000 people lost their lives.[220] Armed battles were fought in the center of the country between the regular army and the *Cristiada* forces, who defended the rights of the Church with the battle cry of "*Viva Cristo Rey*." The Church's whole institutional structure was deeply affected by the closing of churches, monasteries, convents, and schools, as well as by the expulsion of religious orders from the country and the persecution of priests and nuns. During this time, religious ceremonies and the activities of Catholics were clandestine, as was the organization of the entire resistance movement. Finally, in 1929, the Church and the State signed an agreement that ended the conflict, but no changes were made to the legislation.

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[219] The Constitution of 1917 stated, among others: seizing church property, outlawing religious orders, taking control of church matters. The Constitution also prohibited priests from voting, from commenting on any public policy, and would not allow priests to wear their clericals or vestments outside their churches. This meant that public processions, as for example, Corpus Christi, were prohibited.

[220] Jean Meyer, "Revolution and Reconstruction in the 1920s," in *México since Independence,* ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press**,** 1991), 202-204.

Moreover, constitutional rules regarding the Church were gradually abandoned in practice even if they remained on paper.[221]

International events play an important role but at this juncture it is from the outside influencing national policies. Thanks to the religious Cold War launched by Pope Pius XII against communism in 1945, the *modus vivendi* reached by the state and the Church in México, instead of containing the influence of Catholicism, became a springboard for its restoration in Mexican society.[222] This historic moment coincided with the administration of a conservative and openly religious man, President Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946). Between 1950 and 1960, many parishes, seminaries, convents, and religious schools were built or rebuilt in México. In the context of rapid population growth (from 1940 to 1960 the Mexican population grew from 16 million to 35 million), the number of Mexicans per priests increased from 3,791 to 5,413. In those same years, the number of priests grew from 4,220 to 6,466 reaching 8,451 in 1968.[223] This is significant because the number of priests that could minister new churches doubled in twenty years.

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[221] Changes to the constitutional law came until 1992. Under the new law, the Roman Catholic Church is formally recognized by the state, the clergy can vote, the possession of property by churches is legal, and religion may be taught in private schools. México also established diplomatic relations with the Vatican, relations that had been broken in 1867.

[222] In 1949 the Sacred Office made public an excommunication decree against all Communist party members and sympathizers, as well as all those who published, read, wrote or disseminated documents in support of Communist doctrine and practice. See Peter C. Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII: The Roman Catholic Church and the Divisions of Europe, 1943-1950* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2002).

[223] Manuel González, *La Iglesia Mexicana en cifras* (Ciudad de México: Centro de Investigación y Acción Social, 1969), 100.

At the end of World War II (1939-1945), a new International order came from two large blocks headed by the Soviet Union and the United States, each country defending two models of development respectively: the socialist and the capitalist. At first it seemed that both groups could coexist peacefully, as both believed that their projects represented victory against fascism in the world; however, this was not so. For more than 40 years, the Soviet Union and the United States sought to assume a hegemonic role and expand their networks during the period known as the Cold War, which extended to the end of the 1980s. Around 1955, Latin America was recognized as a strategic continent for expansion purposes of a key political actor: The Catholic Church. In 1955, a Conference was created called the Latin American Episcopate (CELAM), whose objectives, according to the Vatican, was to attend the religious problems of the region.

How come the Catholic Mexican church commissioned a foreigner for these important projects? We can speculate that the close relationship between the German artist Mathias Goeritz and the Catholic Church can be explained by the openness that the Church was experiencing. A very important role in this matter is due to the figure of Father Ramón de Ertze Garamendi. He was the same religious leader supporting the church projects of *San Lorenzo* and the *Metropolitan México City Cathedral*. Ertze Garamendi was born and raised in the Basque country and educated in Belgium.[224] Because of his liberal and progressive views, Garamendi accepted and championed

[224] Ph. D. in social sciences (1946) at the Catholic University Lovaina, Belgium.

Goeritz's abstract aesthetic. As stated in the book *La Marcha del Mundo,* Garamendi was ahead of his time in his religious practices. He introduced the use of Spanish during mass, something that the Vatican approved only years later. Ertze Garamendi founded the Institute of Christian Culture where, along with the protestant Bishop Pedro Gringoire, debates were established to foster a dialogue of the differences and similarities between the two churches.[225] These activities were very unusual in the Catholic Mexican world at that time.

The modernization and reform of Christian practices was an attempt to establish a church in closer communion with their practitioners. It was also because most of the restoration projects discussed here were commissioned to Mexican modern architect Ricardo de Robina, who invited Goeritz as a collaborating artist. This openness to modernization in Christian practices had a significant, almost immediate impact on the doctrine and practices of Roman Catholicism, especially in Latin America. The Vatican Council's call for general renewal accelerated the inevitable transformation of the Mexican church. Currents of change, originating in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, were transmitted to Latin America through the writings of the Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain. Maritain's writings were disseminated through the efforts of progressive religious and lay leaders in the 1930's and 1940's, but had little influence on Mexican Catholicism because of the civil and religious conflicts following the Mexican Revolution and the *Cristero* Rebellion. [226] The special attention given to the role

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[225] Ramon de Ertze Garamendi, *La Marcha del Mundo* (San Sebastián: Editorial Saturrarán, 2001), 46.

of the church in modern society by the council documents enabled the Mexican church to challenge the social and political implications of its doctrines, dynamics, and religious practices.[227] The impact of the documents on the understanding and practice of religion did not reach full force until 1968, because of the Second Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM II).

THE SPIRITUAL FUNCTION OF ART

The work at religious spaces allowed Goeritz to put his art at the service of religiosity. As explained in chapter II, the yellow wall in *El eco* inaugurated another line of investigation for Goeritz, namely the effect on architectural space of light reflected on a colored surface. Goeritz's work with reflected light came out of his interest in Expressionism. Expressionist architects like Bruno Taut used light and color to counter the effects of the modern metropolis, as characterized by the German socialist Georg Simmel. For Simmel, the stimulation and rationality of the metropolitan environment led its inhabitants to become indifferent, everything appeared in a "homogenous flat and gray color."[228] In Goeritz's work, the introduction of a brightly colored element to a tonally colorless environment was meant to permeate the public with its reflected light. Light could be caused to flow in any manner the artist willed. This material control over an

[226] Alceu Amoroso Lima, "The Influence of Maritain in Latin America," *New Scholasticism,* 46, no. 1 (Winter 1972): 70-85

[227] Claude Pomerleau, "The Changing Church in México and Its Challenge to the State," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (Oct., 1981): 540-559.

[228] George Simmel, "The Metropolis and mental life," in George Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 329-30.

immaterial medium could then be placed at the disposal of the architects to shape light to their structural needs. While artists were free to used it for their pictorial, and expressive desires.

SAN LORENZO DIÁCONO Y MÁRTIR PARISH (1954)

In 1954, architect Ricardo de Robina invited Goeritz to work on the restoration of the parish church of San Lorenzo Diácono y Mártir, a seventeenth-century colonial building in downtown México City. [229] It is during this period that Goeritz engaged in further investigations into the nature of space, construction materials, and the effect of lighting as a medium. The collaboration of Goeritz and Robina could not have been better, and from it blossomed a lasting personal and professional relationship.[230] Robina believed that to be a good restorer you need to be first and foremost a good architect. He was from the school of preserving the best in old buildings and to add new materials in areas where was needed. That implied the use of modern materials and that's why their professional collaboration was such a success. In 1968, Robina created a special division at the architecture faculty of the National University for restorations of monuments, thus institutionalizing the practice that he had been actively doing since the early 1950s.[231]

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[229] Ertze Garamendi arrived in México in 1949 as a professor for the Catholic University. In 1951, he becomes a Mexican citizen, which gives him freedom to work in other fields. It is in July 31, 1951 that he becomes a *capelián* at the San Lorenzo church.

[230] Ricardo de Robina papers are at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. I was able to study them in May of 2016. Papers, ca. 1946-ca.1960. Accession no. 860297.

[231] Robina, besides being an architect was also an anthropologist and a passionate scholar of pre-Hispanic culture. He was the museographer for the construction of the Anthropology Museum in México City. Robina asked Goeritz in 1964 to collaborate with him at the Sala Huichol and Cora at the after mentioned Museo de Antropología in México City.

For the wall, behind the altar, the apse, Goeritz designed a large cement relief featuring a stigmata hand of Christ as a symbol of salvation (Figure 13). The height of the wall measures fourteen meters high and makes the work more dramatic. Due to the proximity of the hand's fingers to the curved vault, they appear to be touching the sky. The antecedent of the enormous hand behind the altar is the wood sculpture by the name of *Tu Mano*. Done in Guadalajara between 1950 and 1951, the fingers of the hand are contorted as if reflecting pain and agony. The German Critic Christian Schneegas wrote, "Against all possible movable anatomic rules, the fingers seemed to retract in order to elevate and with an undulating movement extend like antennas, or like an octopus arms, to reach out and grab the infinite. This expressive hand, transcends any known work." [232] *Tu mano* would serve as inspiration for the impressive relief at San Lorenzo Diácono y Mártir, *La Mano Divina*.

Composition wise, the enormous hand, at about ten meters height, is reminiscent of the Christ hands at the *Isenheim Altarpiece* done by Mathias Grunewald in the 16th century. According to art critic and historian, Ferruccio Asta, "the strength of this work resides on the strong sentiment that is produced at contemplating the expressionist work of five monumental fingers, which are twisted in evident pain, around the stigma that man gave to the son of God." [233] The *Mano Divina* was created as a relief and painted

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[232] Christian Schneegas, "El Eco-Hommage a Matthias Goeritz," VI Arquitectura emocional," in *Mathias Goeritz 1915-1990. El Eco. Bilder-Skulpturen-Modelle* (Berlin: Akademie der Kunste, 1992), 123.

[233] Ferruccio Asta, "Arte urbano y arquitectura emocional," in *Los Ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Catalogo De la Exposición* …, 112.

white like the background. The aesthetic decision was two-fold: on the one hand, the artist paid tribute to his expressionist heritage and on the other hand the decision of not using color is a very modern one. Monochrome art practice started in 1918 with the Russian's, specifically Kazimir Malevich. But it became well known when Argentinian-Italian artist Lucio Fontana consolidated it in 1949 with his Spatial Concept Series. Monochromatic painting is still an important component of contemporary practices.

For the space above the church choir, Goeritz designed a stained-glass window. It is composed of small pieces of amber-colored glass in an iron armature with an abstract design. This piece is still in existence, as is the majority of Goeritz's stained-glass work at this church. The stained-glass work fills the space with the soft, filtered light of the afternoon sun. According to de Robina, "San Lorenzo is the first colonial church where the restoration incorporated modern elements."[234] Goeritz said in an interview in 1963 that his light interventions in various churches sought to "create an atmosphere of interiority."[235] Goeritz aspired to design naturally lit interior spaces to create atmospheres conductive to spiritual contemplation. He uses religious traditions in general to give form to the universal human drama.

In 1958, Goeritz created the seven stained-glass windows in the church's Moorish-influenced cupola (Figure 14). All the stained glass was made at the *Carretones*

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[234] Ricardo de Robina, "Mi relación con Mathias Goeritz: Escultura urbana, integración plástica y estética del urbanismo," in Los *ecos de Mathias Goeritz...,* 110.

[235] Margarita Nelken, "Exposiciones: Renacer del arte sacro," *Excélsior,* 14 de junio de 1963.

Glass Factory, a company founded in 1889 by the Avalos family.[236] The central window contains a cross on a bright red background, symbolizing the Crucifixion. The other windows depict symbols related to San Lorenzo —the Roman deacon and the church's patron saint - who by order of Emperor Valerian was burned to death on a gridiron. There is only one motif on the lantern panes, and that is the crown of thorns.

The work done by Goeritz at San Lorenzo triggered a debate resulting in an exchange of letters from the National Institute of Anthropology and History asking for the removal and destruction of the works.[237] But in the end, with the intervention of Father Erze Garamendi and the education minister Jaime Torres Bodet nothing was touched.

In the Gothic period (12th to 14th centuries) the art of stained-glass replaces the mosaics and mural paintings of the early Christian and Romanesque churches and is the ultimate stage in the creation of ethereal interior space. Because it gives form and meaning to light, the art of the glazier is perhaps better adapted to the expression of transcendental concepts than any other artistic medium. By the transformation of raw sunlight into a spectrum of brilliant prismatic color, the artist gained complete control over interior lighting. Through the medium of colored light, something of the emotional exaltation so close to Goeritz's aesthetic can still be felt when visiting these spaces of worship.

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[236] Vidrio de Carretones took the name from the street, where it was established, Carretones in México City.

[237] Ferruccio Asta, "Arte urbano y arquitectura emocional," *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz...,* 112.

CHAPEL OF THE CONVENT OF THE CAPUCHIN SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEART OF MARY IN TLALPAN (1953-1960)

In 1955, architect Luis Barragán invited Goeritz, and also artist Jesus Reyes Ferreira, to collaborate at the Capuchin Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary convent in Tlalpan (*Capuchinas Sacramentarias del Purisimo Corazon de Maria*), located in the southern part of México City at *Centro Histórico de Tlalpan*.[238] In addition to designing the altar—a rectangular work covered in gold, similar to his *Mensajes Series,* with a small window in the center that opens onto a monstrance—Goeritz also designed a small chapel in the left wing of the church, separated from the central nave by a diagonal wall pointing toward the altar.[239] Behind this wall, a vertical, floor-to-ceiling stained-glass window with hues ranging from light yellow to orange, transforms the harsh sun light into a soft golden lighting (Figure 15). Both the altar panels and the stained-glass works were installed between 1957 and 1960.[240]

The stained-glass, floor to ceiling, window of amber colors that Goeritz called a 'tower of light,' measures approximately seven meters high and fifty-centimeter wide. For the space, Jesus Reyes Ferreira created a monumental cross that is painted with the color that the artist invented: Mexican pink. The cross sits on the floor, without a base,

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[238] Keith L. Eggener, "Contrasting Images of Identity in the Post-War Mexican Architecture of Luis Barragán and Juan O'Gorman," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies, v*ol. 9, no. 1 (2000): 27-45.

[239] The convent work started in 1953 and it was finished in 1960. The structure was consecrated on April 24, 1960. Cited on Keith L. Eggener, "Expressionism and Emotional Architecture in México: Luis Barragán's collaborations with Max Cetto and Mathias Goeritz," *Journal of the History of Architecture* (January 1995): 94.

[240] Richard Ingersoll, "A la Sombra de Barragan," in *Luis Barragán: La Revolución Callada*, ed. Federica Zanco (Valencia: Institut Valenciá d'Art Modern, 2001), 223.

and sitting totally free, not against a wall. Reyes Ferreira, the third artist of the triumvirate, formed a close artistic collaboration with Barragan and Goeritz. The yellow painted diagonal wall reflects the light onto the monumental cross and the triptych behind the altar. All the straight walls of the convent are painted Mexican pink, a color designed by Reyes Ferreira as well, and contrast with the yellow diagonal one and with the rest of the convent walls that are painted white. Goeritz admired Reyes Ferreira's talent very much. Goeritz wrote, for a Reyes Ferreira exhibit, "He became an aesthetic consultant, and even thought his challenging ideas were not always completed, his proposals were always taken into consideration. What architects could not help admiring was not only his unique sense for color, materials and textures; but also, his visual ideas and his instinct for volumes and spaces."[241] Reyes Ferreira talent became invaluable again when he collaborated with Goeritz and Barragán on the color scheme of *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* to be addressed on next chapter.

Goeritz continued with his predilection of monochrome by his choice of only using amber colors, and at the same time, reiterated his confidence on the intrinsic power of light. Goeritz elaborates: "With this range of color, from light yellow to orange, I intended to model the interior light to make the yellow wall stand out."[242] The artist showed special interest in the luminous environment that generated the stained-glass windows, light synthesis and color of deep symbolic meaning. The reflected light

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[241] Mathias Goeritz, in "Jesus Reyes Ferreira," *Mathias Goeritz: Un Artista Plural: Ideas y Dibujos,* ed. Graciela Kartofel (Ciudad de México: CONACULTA, 1992), 146-147.

[242] Goeritz in a letter to Otto Piene, in *Mathias Goeritz 1915-1990. El Eco. Bilder-Skulpturen-Modelle* (Berlín: Akademie der Kunste, 1992), 215.

simultaneously affected the experience of the space and altered its inhabitant.[243] By reflecting on Goeritz's gold-leaf triptych altarpiece and on the overwhelming palette of yellows in the chapel's interior, this light makes the heaviness of the architectonic structure seem immaterial. This evanescence echoed the qualities that, the German art historian, Wilhelm Worringer had ascribed to the construction of Gothic cathedrals and the lighting effects caused by their stained-glass windows, which lead to an emotive, response to the building.[244]

The diagonal wall channels the light directly toward the altar, thus accentuating the symbolism of the Eucharistic celebration. This light makes the heaviness of the architectural structure seem immaterial. For Goeritz, light is an important preoccupation and an ongoing investigation. Goeritz was very much interested in the environment that light created, and it was always an important element of his stained-glass window development. If the interaction of light and dynamic participation in a temporal sequence was an integral component of Goeritz's art, it was also central to his conception of architecture. This is particularly evident in his contributions to the convent of *Las Capuchinas.*[245] In this project, begun in 1953 and developed over a period of about seven

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[243] Goeritz designed several stained-glass pieces for various structures from 1954 until 1970. They were initially placed in religious structures, including México City's Metropolitan Cathedral (1960-65). He also created works for secular or commercial locations.

[244] For Worringer, "the Gothic need of spiritual expression found a way for itself and spiritualized the material by a delicate process of dematerialization." Wilhelm Worringer, *Form in Gothic* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Ltd., 1927), 161.

[245] For this and many projects Goeritz collaborated with architect Luis Barragán and artist Jesus Reyes Ferreira.

years, the way natural light transforms the internal space makes it a primary and tangible building material.

Goeritz's work at the chapel of the Capuchin Sisters exemplified his conception of emotional architecture. As he wrote in his *Manifiesto de arquitectura emocional*, "Only by receiving true emotion from architecture will man be able to consider it art."[246] Goeritz believed that the public requires something more from architecture than the aesthetics of its materials. The space should give the visitor a spiritual experience. Goeritz goes back and forth writing about spirituality, linked to emotion and the importance of religion and faith. Goeritz's spirituality is linked equally between theory of emotions and religious divinity. His writings talk about the spiritual function of art as an aspect meant to be experienced physically through a range of emotions.

CATEDRAL METROPOLITANA (1960-65)

In 1960, Robina oversaw the restoration of the México City Cathedral, and again commissioned Goeritz to design stained-glass windows for this building. These windows presented a bigger challenge: the space is vast, and it holds an extremely valuable collection of vice regal treasures, especially the Churrigueresque-style main altar known as the *Kings' Retable*. To infuse the cathedral with the same mystic light that the original builders had achieved in the sixteenth century, Goeritz and Robina, utilized recycled glass from beer bottles that were melted down and treated at the *Carretones* factory. More importantly, Goeritz had the immediacy of contact, interpretation, variation, and

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246 "Arquitectura emocional: El Eco," *Cuadernos de Arquitectura*, núm. 1 (1954): s.p.

spontaneity which characterizes the artist- designer's control over the medium, thus ensuring a high degree of artistic value through personal control. Goeritz explained the process in an essay:

> I didn't do a project, sketch or design for the windows. The pieces arrangement came about on its own as we installed the irregular glass panes that I made at the old glass factory, or rather that were made according to my instructions, as I had the kilns and artisans at my disposal. With this material—most of it amber in color—I attempted to model the light inside these enormous spaces in such a way that the gray stone walls took on a golden luminosity.[247]

The result was 134 amber-stained glass panes for the central nave, light blue ones in the cupola, and four red ones in the entry way. Goeritz also designed their metal armature, assembled like a mosaic. The consequence was an interior light that emphasized the gold of the altars and an atmosphere that fostered introspection among churchgoers and their communion with divinity.

These works transported the visitor to the time when the walls, in ancient churches, were covered with onyx, a material that allows light to penetrate and bathe the space in soft light. The fabrication of these pieces took more than five years due to the long period of glass production and financing problems, among other issues. It seems that Goeritz had the same perfection standards that stained-glass masters of the Middle-Ages possessed. These masters transformed spaces without asking for recognition, an issue close to Goeritz's heart: the value of artistic anonymity. Unfortunately, all that remains of this project is a small stained-glass window over the west side door—the others were all

[247] Mathias Goeritz, "Vitrales Modernos en templos antiguos (Una reacción comprensible)," *Arquitectura México,* num. 96/97 (1er semestre, 1967): 86-92.

destroyed, either through a fire that the cathedral suffered or other nature-provoked events (Figure 16). Many of the metal armatures designed by Goeritz are still in place, but the original panes have been replaced by frosted glass or pieces from other sources.

The reception of the stained-glass windows at the Metropolitan Cathedral was very favorable at the beginning. In an article written in the magazine *Cuadernos de Bellas Artes*, September 1961, …"there are already six stained-glass windows installed; the works in various shades of amber and irregular glass pane sizes illuminate the grey stone of the vast space emulating the color gold of the baroque altar … when they are all installed, the Cathedral would gain 100 percent in beauty and religious intimacy."[248] Eighteen months later, the first negative opinion was published by the *Excélsior* newspaper.[249] The views of three scholars in Baroque and colonial art were given to a newspaper reporter. Francisco de la Maza, Ph.D. history, member of the Institute of Aesthetic Research (IIE), and Professor of the National Autonomous University of México (UNAM), argued that out of a total of three schemes presented to restore the windows, (the first two related to rebuilding the stained-glass in accordance with the style of the 16th century), Goeritz proposal was the least good. Architect Manuel González Galván, also a member of the IIE, inspector of colonial monuments in Michoacán, and member of the Board of Conservation of the City of Morelia, noted that nobody should be trying out new ideas on this very important monument. Finally, the Spanish scholar

[248] "Los vitrales de la Catedral," *Cuadernos de Bellas Artes*, año II, núm. 9 (septiembre de 1961): 56.

[249] Ana Cecilia Treviño, "Los vitrales de Goeritz en la Catedral, un desacierto," *Excélsior,* April 25, 1963.

Antonio Bonet Correa, Professor of History at the Central University of Madrid and member of the Higher Council of Research Scientists of the Institute Diego Velázquez, also in Madrid, ruled that Goeritz's stained-glass windows in red and amber colors brought into the Cathedral a light which was not proper for the Renaissance architecture of the Cathedral. After the publication of this interview, a defense came from another scholar, Dr. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini. In a letter to the director of *Excélsior,* she stated that the stained-glass windows satisfy a strong artistic criterion because they are "discrete, simple, beautiful, and they fulfill their function of creating a luminous atmosphere of deep spirituality in the interior of the building."[250] Dr. Rodríguez Prampolini was a well-respected art historian, but the fact that she was Goeritz's wife, could have affected the credibility of her defense.

By far the most provocative comment came in an article published in the *Excélsior* newspaper on April 25, 1963, stating that "Ancient monuments must not be used for experiments." Renowned architect Agustín Piña Dreinhofer accused Goeritz of designing "windows a Go-Go" and destroying the cathedral's atmosphere: "Colorful windows that I think would be wonderful in a cabaret are a disaster in the Cathedral [...]. It is a huge mistake to allow work that tampers with or defiles such a respectable monument as the México City Cathedral."

Fortunately for Goeritz he had a strong supporter in the figure of the Canon of the Cathedral, father Ramón de Ertze Garamendi. Ertze Garamendi was a Spanish refugee,

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[250] Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, "Vitrales en Catedral," *Excélsior,* mayo 5, 1963, 11.

and a columnist for the newspaper *Excélsior*. In his column *Suma y Resta,* Garamendi commented that:

> The magnificent stained-glass work at the Cathedral Primada of México is about to conclude. Its magna works due to several elements: magnitude 140 round windows of different sizes; the quality of each one of them and their integration into the architecture. Work, in short, that constitutes the fundamental contribution of our time, to the history of the sacred building, giving it a special decorum.[251]

In Ertze Garamendi's view, successive generations of artistic leadership had left evidence of different artistic styles and, in these circumstances, the unity of style was a myth and an aberration. For the author, the stained-glass windows were art objects by "the quality of the glass, by the rhythm of colors, by the symphony of forms, by the light that gives warmth and color to large surfaces of stone ... and their function is to illuminate [the space] forming a special environment." Concluding in the same *Excélsior* newspaper article, he stated that "the beautiful Renaissance architecture and the exquisite and delicate baroque altars have been reappraised with the luminosity of our days." These debates tell us that the controversy about the stained-glass work was the fact that the works were lacking figuration. Goeritz was very proud of the project and he considered it "the first installation done with light in the 20th century inside an ancient cathedral." [252] The approximate measurements of this temple are 59 meters wide by 128 meters long and 60 meters high to the dome, making it the largest cathedral in the Americas.

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[251] *Excélsior*, 13 de septiembre de 1966.

[252] Mathias Goeritz, "Vitrales Modernos en templos antiguos (Una reacción comprensible)," *Arquitectura México,* num. 96/97 (1er semestre, 1967): 87.

CUERNAVACA CATHEDRAL (1961)

Despite the México City Cathedral debate, Mathias Goeritz received more invitations to collaborate on the renovation of colonial churches. In 1961, the Cuernavaca, Morelos bishop Sergio Méndez Arceo—known for very actively promoting the Church's involvement in social issues —invited him to collaborate on the restoration of the *Cuernavaca Cathedral*, an old Franciscan church from the 16th century. Goeritz and Méndez Arceo developed a profound and long enduring friendship during the time that Goeritz lived in Cuernavaca. In a conversation with Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, she recalled that Méndez Arceo was a constant guest at Ida and Goeritz's home in Cuernavaca. Later, Méndez Arceo became a controversial person, to say the least, in defending the less fortunate members of society.

Among the most important modernizing changes in the Catholic Church were the reforms to the pastoral renewal initiated by Méndez Arceo at the diocese of Cuernavaca. The modernization of the church was not only on aesthetic issues but on a deep conviction that the church should do more for social issues. In 1970 Méndez Arceo was invited to speak at a Catholic conference in Puebla, México. He spoke to three thousand students at Puebla University against Capitalism and rampant materialism and for church renovation:

> The evangelical spirit of communion and community among men cannot be realized in the capitalist, individualistic and materialistic system, it is necessary a democratic socialism ... The Church is not a perfect society, the priests must change structures within one's own Church, so that later it can be an agent of change.[253]

Méndez Arceo presented Socialism as the most coherent system with evangelical principles. At the same time, he considered the word of God as a revolutionary element for the transformation of people. Bishop Méndez Arceo also initiated the first *Comunidades de Base* in México, the small Christian communities that later become the vanguard of church renewal in Latin America. The Bishop of Cuernavaca influenced progressive clergy and lay leaders throughout México as he became a spokesman for religious renewal and a target of conservatives. Méndez Arceo was one of the main leaders of Theology Liberation, which spread liberal policies throughout México and Latin America. He was the target of violent attacks against reform in Mexican Catholicism, because he championed social justice. On March 9th 1978, Méndez Arceo was officially criticized by the executive committee of the Bishops Conference (CEM) for his support of socialism.[254] Goeritz was never outspoken like Méndez Arceo; his foreign condition probably deterred him. I include the previous paragraphs on the work of Méndez Arceo as to give background information on Goeritz's close religious relations and to put into context Goeritz's work at this period.

As he had done at the México City Cathedral, Goeritz replaced the plain windows with stained-glass ones. Here, an effort was made to harmonize the colors with the paintings on the church's walls depicting the martyrdom of Mexican missionaries in

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[253] Carlos Fazio, "Don Sergio Méndez Arceo: Patriarca de la solidaridad liberadora," in *Sicsal: Artículos y Noticia*s. http://sicsal.net/articulos/node/347 accessed on November 20th, 2016.

[254] Claude Pomerleau, "The Changing Church in México and Its Challenge to the State," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (Oct., 1981), 558.

Japan in 1597. Goeritz again attempted to create a luminous environment appropriate for meditation and religious experience. All the stained-glass works are amber color except for one, in red, located in the choir space. The red stained-glass work is dramatically magnified with the afternoon sunlight (Figure 17). Red, after all, represents the life force and all forms of desire and passion.

Incidentally, the artist used the red color when he created a monumental metal mural for the lobby at the German Institute in México City. The mural belongs to the *Mensajes Series* and was done in 1967. These two examples, the *Mensaje* at the German Institute, and the red stained-glass work, might be the only instances where he used red so predominantly. Goeritz used red at the stained-glass work in Santiago Tlaltelolco parish, but the light is more dramatic on the blue stained-glass ones.

At the Cuernavaca Cathedral, Goeritz had the opportunity of working with one of his former University of Guadalajara architecture students, Fray Gabriel Chavez de la Mora. Shortly after his architecture graduation, Chavez de la Mora entered the Benedictine monastery Santa Maria de la Resurrección at Ahuacatitlan, Morelos, and took the vows of the order. Méndez Arceo commissioned Chavez de la Mora to work out a general plan to restore and renovate the Cathedral of Cuernavaca. Chavez de la Mora worked along with Goeritz and De Robina who, as in other projects, removed every kind of superficial decoration, achieving austerity in the interior space of the church while revealing the murals that originally decorated it.[255] The 17th-century murals covers 400

[255] Daniel Garza Usabiaga, "The renovation of art and religious architecture during the fifties and sixties," in *Desafío a la estabilidad: procesos artísticos en México 1952-1967/ Defying stability: artistic processes in México,* ed, Rita Eder (Ciudad de México: UNAM / Turner, 2014), 429.

square meters of the interior walls and narrates the story of Philip of Jesus, the first Mexican saint, and twenty-three missionaries crucified in Japan in 1597.

Again, Goeritz's stained-glass works at Cathedral of Cuernavaca sparked a wave of protest. In his defense, the strong and influential figure of Bishop Méndez Arceo pointed out that religious architecture should be designed to fulfill the needs of worshipers, not to create museum pieces. Fortunately, the stained-glass works created by Goeritz are still intact, a quite remarkable fact due to the size of the space.

PARROQUIA DE LOS SANTOS APÓSTOLES FELIPE Y SANTIAGO AZCAPOTZALCO/ PARISH OF SAINT JAMES AND SAINT PHILIP (1961-62)

Between 1961 and 1962, architect Robina invited Goeritz to collaborate on the renovation of the 16th Century Dominican church in the town of Azcapotzalco in the northwestern district of México City. The parish has the distinction of having an extraordinary and very rare coffered ceiling in the cloister (this is one of two surviving in all of México City). At this space, Goeritz designed stained-glass in gold and amber colors (Figure 18). They are located above the altar with eight surrounded the main cupola of the parish. It's probably the smallest of all the colonial spaces that he worked on and feels the most intimate of all.

Yellow and amber colors were the most used by Goeritz in his stained-glass designs. The colors have harmony with each other, and each represents a symbol. According to Catholic thought, light that has not been split is a symbol of the presence and wisdom of God. The colors reveal different aspects of the human spirit. Since light in

architecture is vital, the different colors and light should be in perfect harmony with each other to have a positive impact on the users. This is the same effect expected of the placement of the colors. For example, yellow is a symbol of the heat of the sun, and creates a cheerful and lively atmosphere, strengthening the nerves, and stimulating the mind.

Goeritz was in contact with the latest developments of philosophy and found in phenomenology a good source to validate his ideas. The mystic environments that he created through the design of his stained-glass relate to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's ideas on phenomenology as put forward in his *Phenomenology of Perception* of 1945, which stressed the active role of the human body in perceiving the world. Artists took up the idea of the eye as part of a body that is situated in relation to its wider physical environment by creating complex works that invited the spectator's movement around them. Because the perception of a work is made infinitely changeable as the observer moves around it, an element of temporality is introduced into the act of viewing any work of art.

Goeritz considered religious art to be an important and necessary response for a society that was excessively materialistic:

> I believe in the profound need for unification between the religious concept and the artistic concept. I acknowledged that many times secular art gives me the impression of greater 'religiosity' than images or forms that are produced in the attempt to make religious art. Not only in art, but also in most examples of church architecture and even objects of Liturgical function, I find less religious spirit than in some constructions or works whose intention has been far from similar purposes ... However - to bring it together in a few words, I believe that any artistic yearning, to be

> understandable only outside the logic and of pure intelligence, carries, in the background, a restlessness that could well be called religious. In Centuries ago, this uneasiness was openly under a common dogma. Today every individual reserves the right to his misfit dogma. Here is the reason for the current artistic chaos. [256]

On this statement, Goeritz contradicts himself. He calls for an art where religious and artistic concept are one. On the other hand, he also acknowledges that there are many non-liturgical works that feel more religious to him than the ones done with the intention of serving liturgy. Goeritz was a complicated man that believed in a higher God but did not attach himself to a specific religion. His interests and inquisitive mind took him to admire some aspects of each major religion.

PARISH OF SANTIAGO TLATELOLCO (1963-64)

The Parish of Santiago Tlatelolco was the church of an old Franciscan monastery.[257] Between 1963 and 1964 Goeritz and architect Robina decided on a purist style of renovation corresponding to that religious order's ascetic ideals. In the cupola, they placed four intensely red stained-glass windows; in the lateral naves, eleven blue panels. A geometric depiction of the Stations of the Cross (*Via Crucis*) completed the concept. The Stations of the Cross are spread along the two main halls. There is a total of fourteen iron frame works that consists of a single cross depicting Jesus' Calvary in an abstract way.

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[256] Mathias Goeritz, "Aclaración" *Arquitectura/México*, Núm. 78, México (junio de 1962): 122.

[257] It was originally a school to teach Indians in their native tongue, Nahuatl, higher education. They were also taught Latin and Spanish. Among the professors was the historic friar Bernardino de Sahagún who wrote the *Universal History of the Things of New Spain* also known as Florentino Codex.

Unlike his previous stained-glass windows, Goeritz used mostly blue color glass to flood the space with a mystical light evocative of a supernatural dimension (Figure 19). In iconography, blue represents the sky and transcendence. Blue symbolizes the element of faith. It epitomizes, as stated in Wassily Kandinsky book, the belief in blue as a heavenly color, radiating inwards and away from the spectator, thereby creating a desire for the pure and supernatural.[258]

The altar consists of a triptych similar in style to the one at *Capuchinas Convent*. The gilded work belongs to the artist *Mensajes Series*. The difference is that at the center of the main gold panel is inserted a fragment of the original 16th Century altar (Figure 20). It shows the Santiago Apostle mounted on his white horse fighting against an ocelot warrior next to the Spaniards, who win a battle against the natives. The natives are represented as souls in purgatory. The contrast of the ancient polychrome wood relief and Goeritz's minimal gold one is very effective.

Mathias Goeritz closely studied the structure of vice-regal buildings, especially the effects of light in interior spaces. He also referred to the symbolism of color in Mexican religious belief. He attempted to achieve a luminous atmosphere that would enhance the mystical power of symbols to ensure a meditative experience. The refractive angles resulting from the lead settings served to enhance the light, ensuing in a vibrant, almost magical atmosphere. Goeritz's work in stained glass never failed to arouse

[258] Wassily Kandinsky, *Complete Writings on Art*, edited by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (Boston: G.K. Hall, c1982), 199.

controversy. While some considered it to be part of the atmosphere of a church that was alive and vibrant, others felt that it was too theatrical.

Emotional architecture, founded and championed by Goeritz, in its sculptural-religious aspect proposes to understand architecture as a return to the most intimate and personal value of the human being. Goeritz considered the stained-glass works as sculptural installations, and his research of lighting effects on buildings started intuitively by physically studying the light at different times of the day.[259] The colonial church is in an old area of México City, named *Plaza de las Tres Culturas* (three cultures square). There are archeological remains from pre-Hispanic time, the colonial church and the modern-era represented by Nonoalco complex. The square was the space of the Tlatelolco massacre of 1968 that will be discussed in chapter V.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The cultural optimism of the post-revolutionary years continued into the 1950s and 1960s, when México experienced a period of modernization, growth, economic strength, and its greatest political stability since the *Porfiriato*.[260] The population began to increase, virtually doubling between 1940 and 1960,[261] as waves of immigrants moved from rural areas to the cities, and dramatically altered the nation's demographics. The

[259] Goeritz's notebooks at his archive, Instituto Cabanas, Guadalajara.

[260] Armando Pereira, "La generación del medio siglo: un momento de transición de la cultura mexicana," *Literatura mexicana* 6, no. 1 (1995): 188.

[261] According to Census records, the nation's population increased from 19,653,552 in 1940 to 25,791,017 in 1950 and 34,923,129 in 1960. Estadísticas Históricas de México. Tomo I. (México: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática/Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1985, 9. México City's population increased from 1,802, 679 to 3,137,599 to 5, 251,755 during this same period, 24.

nation's literacy rate jumped from 46% to 66.5% during this same period, and consequently produce a much bigger audience for literature and mass media. With this the creation of numerous new presses, and, ultimately, larger editions of published works. Although the United States' attention was turned toward Europe during World War II, México's economy was strengthened. Exports rose 100% between 1939 and 1945, while imports declined. As cultural contact (including imports such as books and journals) with Europe and the United States diminished, the nation (along with others in Latin America) began to rely more heavily on its own resources. The resulting national confidence was reflected in a cultural effervescence of the period. The intellectual infrastructure expanded as literary journals reflecting both nationalist and cosmopolitan interests proliferated.

With the beginning of the presidential term of Adolfo Ruiz Cortines in December of 1952, the government looked for the structuring of a public policy that could maintain the positive progress that the national economy experienced during previous six years. This public policy was called "stabilizing development." It ought to maintain the stability of the economy through a policy of exchange currency policy, the pursuit of inflation control as well as avoiding minimum wage increases.

The stabilization policies also achieved greater support for the industrial sector, especially in manufacturing and processing, but to the detriment of the agricultural industry, which suffered ~~a~~ severe stagnation. Fostering direct foreign investment in the country, was achieved through trade unions, either through the creation of unions favorable to certain industries or through the State exploiting the existing conflicts within

them.[262] However, this economic model also had its negative points. Little by little various social and economic problems began to grow because a fair distribution of wealth was never achieved. The so-called *Mexican Miracle,* discussed on Chapter I, was gone by the end of the 1960s decade.

MENSAJES SERIES

While Goeritz was working with Catholic spaces, he initiated the *Mensajes Series* (Messages). While stained-works windows were created for public religious spaces, the *Mensajes* were, for the most part, for the domestic and personal space.[263] This series was a response to a very painful and traumatic period of profound spiritual reflection. In 1957, his marriage to photographer Marianne Gast came to an end. In 1958, Marianne died of cancer. One of the artist's creative responses was the initiation of the series where nails can be interpreted as a metaphor of crucifixion. Goeritz choose the French word, *Clouages*, (French for nailing) to refer to them. Goeritz perforated monochrome metal plates with nails covering their surfaces with irregular patterns of holes (Figure 21). As an illustration on dates we have the record of *Message 1 Job XIX: 26* sold at Christie's auction in 2001. The work is signed, titled, and dated 1957.

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[262] Elisa Servín, "Los enemigos del progreso: crítica y resistencia al desarrollismo de medio siglo," in *Historia critica de las modernizaciones en México, T.06 del nacionalismo al neoliberalismo, 1940-1994*, coordinator Elisa Servín (Ciudad de México: Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas/ FCE/ CONACULTA, /Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana/ Fundación Cultural de la Ciudad de México, 2010), 79-127.

[263] There are several monumental *Mensajes* but they were commissioned by companies and institutions. Hotel Camino Real and Instituto Aleman, both in México City are examples.

After Marianne's death, the initial *Mensajes* became almost an interminable series. He often added subtitles referencing specific passages from the Bible, thereby linking these monochromes to prophetic pronunciations. The *Mensajes Series* were also composed of smooth gold leaf on wood, and later gilded metal plates fastened into wooden armatures. The series of gold smooth reliefs are titled *Mensajes Metacromáticos* (*Metachromatic Messages*). These series are good examples of Goeritz's production during 1959 and 1960, when he sought to transform "form and color into manifestations of adoration," producing what he called "the metaphysical monochrome."[264] The whole body of work, *Clouages* and *Mensajes Metacromáticos* are known as *Mensajes* (Messages).[265] *Clouages* works can be considered as 'icon sign' of a confrontation with tragic human existence. The sickness and death of Marianne coincided with his first trip back to Germany. On the one hand, Goeritz *Messages* can be examples of laceration for not giving himself as much as Marianne did in the relationship.[266] Visiting Germany made him face all the trauma lived before and after the war, losing his brother, home, even the German question, all came back to haunt him.

The series have titles from the Old Testament, inspired by Moses and the prophets Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel. According to Schneegass, all the *Metachromatic Messages*

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[264] Cited by Francisco Reyes Palma, "Oratorio monocromático: Los Hartos," in *Los Ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y Testimonios*, eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), 125.

[265] Goeritz called the gilded smooth panels *Mensajes Metacromáticos* (Metachromatic Messages).

[266] "Marianne" *Arquitectura/México* No. 68 (December 1959): 246.

of the 1960's are variations of Psalm 117, and all the laminated perforated brass works with nails, called *Clouages*, and painted red, make references to Solomon's sermons.

> When I finished the first one, it seemed quite 'Biblical.' I titled *Message* and then I read the Bible, I discovered the type of message I had in mind. When I read the Bible with more time, I soon discovered other messages. Sometimes the titles were chosen after finishing the work; other times I did the work especially for a biblical text. Why did I choose exactly those words from the Bible? Probably because those words speak to me more than others.[267]

The *Metachromatic Messages* were all exhibited at Carstairs Gallery in a March 1960 solo show. [268] Six months later Goeritz inaugurated his solo exhibit at México City's Galería Antonio Souza. The titles of the nineteen *Mensajes*, from the Old Testament, are as follows:

> Message number 1-Job XIX:26; Message 2-3 Moses XIV:54; Message 2-C-Job X:22; Message 3-A-5 Moses XXVIII:6; Message 5-Solomon versicle XX:15; Message 7-A- Solomon versicle XXVI:9: Message 7-B Solomon sermon VII:6; Message 7-C Solomon sermon VII:6; Message 8 Jeremiah lament IV:I; Message 9-Job IX:29; Message 10- Jeremiah XXV:34/37; Message II-apocryphal XIX:5/6; Message 12- Jeremiah lament II:44; Message 13-5-Moses XXVI:17; Message 15-3-Moses XX:18; Message 16-Isaiah V:30; Message 17- Isaiah II:24; Message 21-I Moses II:19.

Goeritz titled the works with only the number of the specific bible book and at the back of the artwork he included the pertinent commentary of the bible book. For example, *Message IX, Job 9:29* located now at the Carnegie Museum of Art is titled at

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[267] Margaret Rigg, "Messages: The sculpture paintings of Mathias Goeritz," *Motive*, vol. XX, num. 5 (1960): 64.

[268] Christian Schneegass, "El Eco-Hommage a Mathias Goeritz," in *Mathias Goeritz 1915-1990. El Eco. Bilder-Skulpturen-Modelle* (Berlín: Akademie der Kunste, 1992), 375.

the back using the exact language as the above bible – 'If I Be Wicked, Why Then Labour I in Vain?'

A bible reading to one of the works titles can take us closer in understanding Goeritz's messages meanings. For instance, the bible says on Job XIX: 26: "And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God."[269]

> The Spirit of God, now, seems to have powerfully wrought on the mind of Job. Here he witnessed a good confession; declared the soundness of his faith, and the assurance of his hope. Job was taught of God to believe in a living Redeemer; to look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Job was assured, that this Redeemer of sinners from the yoke of Satan and the condemnation of sin, was his Redeemer, and expected salvation through him. A living, quickening, commanding principle of grace in the heart, is the root of the matter; as necessary to our religion as the root of the tree, to which it owes both its fixedness and its fruitfulness. Job and his friends differed concerning the methods of Providence, but they agreed in the root of the matter, the belief of another world.[270]

Metaphysical preoccupations are present in this series of works and biblical quotations lead us to an approximation of a rather desperate situation. Goeritz's *Clouages Mensajes Series* can be read as examples of the artist's anxiety and trauma, where the surface of the metal work has been slashed and nailed. On the surface of some of these works, the artist assembled nails with protruding tips; in others, he opted to employ overlapping sheets of tin with open holes that were either painted gold or left to rust. In fact, in 1963 Goeritz's

[269] Goeritz used King James Bible.

[270] Mombert, J. I. "On Job. Xix. 25-27," *Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis* 2, no. 1 (1882): 27-39.

friend Frederick Kiesler, a New York-based architect, explained: "Goeritz sometimes uses nails instead of paint. The heads of nails that march, march, obeying his commands in strict formations. Steel helmets of a peace army."[271] Goeritz began making regular visits to New York City starting in 1955, and while in New York met Kiesler. In 1969, Goeritz wrote the exhibition catalogue essay of his work.[272]

Metachromatic Messages, done a couple of years later, 1960, are representations where the personal, existential and emotive are replaced by a new detachment. *Metachromatic Messages* "attempt to create a completely spiritual atmosphere."[273] The gilded works have a luminosity that echoes the investigations that Goeritz was making at the time with the stained-glass environments in churches. Light, after all, is a sacred element. These series of works were his more personal oeuvre and were created while he was doing stained-glass and other artistic works for Catholic religious spaces.

Goeritz's *Mensajes* series are considered by scholars as important representations of his complete oeuvre, and they were created specifically with golden color. Goeritz investigated changes in everyday light with its incalculable complexity of gradation. The works change in their aspect not only through lighting but also as the spectator move before them, giving them a kinetic quality. The *Mensajes Series* can be viewed as a form

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[271] Clive Bamford Smith, *Builders in the Sun: Five Mexican Architects* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., Inc, 1967), 132.

[272] Exhibition catalogue of *Frederick Kiesler* published in conjunction with show held April 12 - May 10, 1969. Introduction by Mathias Goeritz. Howard Wise Gallery, New York City.

[273] Carstairs Gallery, NYC, press release, March 1962, *An Artist's Expression of Faith*. The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. Correspondence Alfred Schmela with Mathias Goeritz, April 10, 1958 to June 14, 1962. Accession no. 860297.

of alchemy reconciling opposites, or as a modernist synthesis, given that modernism aims at promoting aesthetic research while preserving the trans-historical properties of tradition. Goeritz synthesizes multiple sources of inspiration, including prehistoric and non-European art into a modernist visual grammar reaching beyond appearances.

The *Mensajes* works are the continuation of the religious practice that Goeritz started with the *Salvador de Auschwitz* series, as well as other small and medium wood sculptures such as the ones exhibited at the 1956 solo exhibit at Carstairs Gallery in New York City. Goeritz titled several of his works, at this show, as follows: *Angel, Little Trumpet Angel, Moses, Prophet, the Crucified,* and *The Monk.* There is a gouache drawing with the title *Moses.*[274] According to scholar Daniel Garza Usabiaga, "…until then no religious representations of this sort existed that ventured so far into the simplification of the form. In Goeritz's case, this simplified solution was related to the archaic style that his work embraced still greatly influenced by his artistic pursuit at the School of Altamira." [275] The new *Mensajes* and *Clouages* were devoid of figurative elements.

The *Mensajes* series is related to Goeritz's intention of making visible a spiritual experience without using Christian iconography. Goeritz use of gold should also be

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[274] Mathias Goeritz, *Sculptures and Drawings*, Carstairs Gallery exhibition catalogue, 1956. At the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, May 2016.

[275] Daniel Garza Usabiaga, "The renovation of art and religious architecture during the fifties and sixties," in *Desafío a la estabilidad: procesos artísticos en México 1952-1967/ Defying stability: artistic processes in México*, ed. Rita Eder (Ciudad de México: UNAM / Turner, 2014), 421.

correlated with the religious iconography of Byzantine and pre-Renaissance western Christian imagery in which gold symbolizes divine transcendence. In 1937 Goeritz travelled to Venice and Ravena, where he was enthralled with the mosaics. The use of gold in illuminated manuscripts was equally linked to the inner light of the divine. Interestingly, the techniques of mosaics relied on the optical effect created by tesserae of different colors arranged in a certain way. Therefore, the technique bears some resemblance to modernist uses of geometric shapes. Goeritz concern was to communicate something about human emotion and that people who were emotionally affected by his works have the same religious experience that he had while creating them. He was not interested in relationships of color or form or anything else but interested in expressing basic human emotions: tragedy, ecstasy, doom, and so on. His search of religious perspectives was not for a specific closeness to a church. Rather, his main preoccupation was God who represented the only stable value in these confusing times. As a German citizen Goeritz continued, throughout his life, to remember the nightmare of World War II where he lost a brother. These unstable times also correspond to anxieties of living in the nuclear age

Through his choice of gold as both material and sound, he exposes the discrepancy between the monetary and symbolic value of art. Repeating the word *oro* (gold in Spanish) in his concrete poetry, ambivalence is conveyed through the reiteration of the letters o-r-o which echo the two meanings of the word: gold and pray. This semantic interplay is expanded in *Metachromatic Messages.* While the former served a more decorative function, the punctured surfaces of *Clouages*, refer to the Passion—a

symbolic content reinforced by lines from the Old Testament that Goeritz sometimes added to their labels.

As stated by Carla Stellweg in her essay, "Magnet - New York: conceptual, performance, environmental, and installation art by Latin American artists in New York:"

> Although these works looked abstract, they were almost like small chapels, explicitly designed to evoke spiritual sensations in the spectator. Each and every installation of his work, whether outdoors or indoors, was meant to convey his conviction that art was not just to be viewed but to be experienced in a profound manner, as though in communion with values higher than materialism. It is on this level that his work influenced artists from all over the world, particularly those who had begun to question the meaning of dematerialized art.[276]

Contemporary conceptual artist Luis Camnitzer recalls: "Goeritz was a very influential figure that we had all heard and admired. Aside from his work, he was an inspiration in terms of the attitudes towards art making."[277] Goeritz created dramatic installations in which the *Mensajes* were lit only by candlelight against a dark wall background. Daniel Garza Usabiaga continues, "Goeritz championed an art of stable referents, and as he said, God was the most stable of all. Light is a perfect way to represent this religious referent. A monochrome works in the same way: without representation; it is a symbol of 'the whole and of nothing.'" [278] With this golden room installation Goeritz generated a hymn

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[276] The essay constitutes one of the most comprehensive documents that exist on the participation of artists from Latin America in the 1970s New York art scene. Carla Stellweg in *The Latin American spirit: art and artists in the United States, 1920-1970,* ed. Luis R. Cancel (New York: Bronx Museum, 1988), 288.

[277] Carla Stellweg, on "Magnet-New York: Conceptual, Performance, Environmental, and Installation Art by Latin American Artists in New York" in Luis R. Cancel, ed., *the Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970* (New York: The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1989), 288.

[278] Daniel Garza Usabiaga, *Mathias Goeritz y la arquitectura emocional* una revisión crítica (1952-1968) (Ciudad de México: Conaculta, 2012), 385.

to the abstract world. For Goeritz "the sensations of light on the work" could be "spiritual experiences."[279] According to Kandinsky, whose writings Goeritz read in depth, the "spiritual experience," was the same whether it was in the Moscow churches or the Bavarian and Tyrolean chapels. I understand it as an artistic experience of religion and a religious experience of art—a sense of the merger of spiritual and artistic experience, the reciprocity that can be found in the works of certain artists like Kandinsky, Mark Rothko, Ad Reinhardt and Goeritz. The mention of Ad Reinhardt is important since Goeritz and Ad maintained similar concerns and mail correspondence. [280]

IMPORTANCE OF SERIALITY AND GOLD ON HIS WORK

Another central theme in Goeritz's *Mensajes Series* (1950s–60s) is his formal and conceptual interest in seriality and repetition. We can find that interest even in the name that he gave to his creation, *Museo Experimental: el eco*. As its name indicates, in Spanish, *el eco* conveys repetition and reiteration. Later in the life of the *Mensajes* series, Goeritz used seriality as a way of questioning or destabilizing the individual 'aura' of painting, the notion that a work of art must be, by definition, single, unique, and irreplaceable. The monochrome gold series were executed according to the artist instructions given by telephone to the carpenter.[281] When the work was completed,

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[279] Mathias Goeritz, "Vitrales Modernos en templos antiguos (Una reacción comprensible)," *Arquitectura México,* num. 96/97 (1er semestre, 1967): 86-92.

[280] Ad Reinhardt papers, 1927-1968. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Collections Online / reinad/Box_0001/Folder_058. Acapulco postcards sent by Goeritz to Reinhardt on January 25th 1963.

Goeritz would sign, or not, and date the work on the back of the wood stretcher.[282] With these works by Goeritz, the monochrome tells a story that posits the movement as an artistic solution that could participate within an international context and, maintain other discrete intentions, such as canceling out authorship of the work of art. Goeritz left many of the works discussed in this chapter, unsigned, further de-fetishizing the work of art and its production, as he discussed in an interview with writer Elena Poniatowska:

> Goeritz: [T]he real value of a drawing is the same as that made by anyone; but, in the end, one costs ten thousand pesos and the other nothing.
>
> Poniatowska: So, what is paid for is the signature?
>
> Goeritz: Yes.[283]

Goeritz's unsigned and numbered works lack the 'aura' of art in the traditional sense: they do not claim to be authentic, singular products of an individual artist. But this is a posture taken by many artists at this period to get away from the commodification of art. They had, in the eyes of some, no artistic value. Goeritz made this point to French artist Yves Klein, who had attacked him for plagiarizing his famous monochromes: "the difference between the two of us is that you think that what we are making is art. I don't." [284] This promulgation was probably done to appease Klein and is one of Goeritz's

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[281] Historically the first art work made this way was done by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy (b. 1895, Borsod, Austria-Hungary; d. 1946, Chicago).

[282] With the same spirit as László Moholy-Nagy.

[283] Elena Poniatowska, *Todo México*, vol. 5 (México: Ed. Diana, 1999), 35

[284] Quoted in Morais, Mathias Goeritz, 46.

contradictory statements. He had to think of *Mensajes* as works of art. They were exhibited, in museums exhibits and prominent art galleries, in New York and México City and sold as such. At least half of the series is signed. On one side he uses biblical titles, and on the other, these series are the most designer-friendly works. We can assume that this type of work served two purposes: Firstly, to bring an anonymous aspect to the work like a medieval period artist (the author's negation). Secondly, his instructions were executed like Conceptual artists did several years later. The concept was developed by him, and he only needed to give the carpenter, by telephone, the dimensions of the work. By removing all gesture, texture, and figure from the work, a philosophical stance was taken. At the same time, this anonymous stance exemplifies Goeritz's contradictory nature. On one side, he championed not signing artwork and on the other hand he constantly wrote about his artistic work in editorials and articles. These inconsistences will come crashing with the authorship of *Las Torres de Ciudad Satélite* discussed in next chapter.

Goeritz use of gold as material was repeated conceptually in his concrete poetry practice. Goeritz was one of the most active practitioners of concrete poetry where the usage of font, size, structure is more important that their meaning, where language is used as a material. According to Brazilian art critic Frederico Morais, Goeritz reached his Concrete poetry pinnacle in 1959 with his poem titled *Die Goldene Botschaft*, (Gold Message in German). [285] In this poem the word *Oro* is used, graphically, to explore all the

[285] Frederico Morais, "Poesía Concreta," in *Los Ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y Testimonios*, eds. Ida

spatial, and phonetic possibilities. *Die Goldene Botschaft,* (*Mensaje de Oro*) also has the distinction of being the image used for the exhibition catalogue cover published in conjunction with the show held at the Venice Biennale: *Mostra de Poesia Concreta*, September 25 - October 10, 1969 (Figure 22).

The word *Oro* is repeated using different patterns and varying the spaces between each letter. Linguistic structure was merged with typographical pride to such an extent that conventional readings were rendered not only inappropriate but ridiculous. In Concrete poetry, graphic layout and phonetic wordplay combined to expose the aesthetic side effects and clearness of textual representations. For Goeritz, the visual impact of his poems was an important part of his oeuvre; it represented another outlet to his creative spirit and another example of his simultaneous involvement with international art movements. Goeritz's international stature in this field became cemented when he organized the first large exhibition of Concrete poetry held outside of Brazil, in México City in 1966.[286]

For example, Goeritz produced a tridimensional mural relief in 1961 with the title of "*El Eco del Oro*," with the word 'Oro' spelled in the first line, followed only by the letter 'o' in the following 9 lines. While the underlying principle is geometry, he creates totemic structures and spiritually charged monochromes, sculptures, and concrete poetry. We can infer that all the artistic work of Mathias Goeritz has been basically marked in

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Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), 163-165.

[286] The exhibition was titled *Poesía Concreta Internacional,* and the space where it took place was Galería Universitaria Aristos, Universidad Autónoma de México. Eugen Gromringer was one of the exhibitors.

large part, in all its forms of expression (painting, sculpture, architecture and literature), by poetics, where his many manifestos and programmatic declarations have taken the form of messages.

As stated by artists and author, Luis Camnitzer, "In Conceptualism, language can serve as a vehicle for altering the system by creating new forms of consciousness in tension with the existing system. Poetry falls in this category, and it is in this dimension that language became critical in Latin American Conceptualism."[287] Goeritz's concrete poetry placed importance in graphic layout, phonic wordplay and combined to expose the aesthetic side effects and clearness of textual representations. Goeritz developed the concept of visual impact through the qualities of calligraphy and of the vision of an idea. The lettering, is an expression of a message that converts the text into a graphic landscape.

Gold can thus be read as wealth or spiritual essence in a way like the Byzantine artists used it. This connection with the Middle-Ages was not fortuitous. In both his practice and writings, Goeritz attacked the vacuity of contemporary art and the proclaimed superiority of the artist, advocating instead for a return to the anonymity and collectivity of art of the Middle-Ages, and of works infused with meaning and significance. In some Byzantine mosaics, the luminosity of the golden tiles is heightened using red glass, and this was used, by Goeritz, with great effect with the stained-glass

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[287] Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 161.

works of religious spaces. Goeritz used mostly amber (gold) color for his stained-glass works and as mentioned early in the chapter, he used red glass in two of the six spaces that we covered in this chapter. If light, and its shimmering reflection on the uneven tesserae, was crucial to the conception, decoration, and meaning of early-Christian churches, it is equally conducive to spirituality in Goeritz's works. Goeritz advocated for art that could create an emotion on the viewer and that is what I mean by being conducive to spirituality.

Gold was a *leitmotif* in Goeritz's work. He used it in huge reliefs of steel, which were intervened with a golden color material. Like Egyptian, Tantric, Byzantine, and Medieval artists before him, Goeritz was led to gold as a symbol of infinity, as an expression of a religiosity that exalts death as well as life, or conflates them into a love-death unity. His series of monochromatic plaques begun in 1957, are considered to have reached their fullest expression in the 1960s. For example, *Message (Mensaje)*[288] from 1967, was made from a punched sheet of steel that, like the altarpiece of a baroque church, was then carefully covered with gold leaf. The rich texture and profound luminosity of the work is designed to trigger a visceral reaction in the viewer and foster contemplation.

The monochrome gold reliefs series titled *Metachromatic Messages,* were also meant to be looked at not as representations of something else but just as the objects themselves. These works may be seen as crossing the line into sculpture or object-hood,

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[288] Goeritz went back and forth using both the Spanish and English work for *Mensajes.*

and presence rather than representation. These works were created in a highly polished wood base with gold leaf on the surface. Their luminosity was the most important element and, in comparison with the *Clouages Mensajes*, there was no texture. What played a role here, just as it did with the first generation of abstract artists like Kandinsky, and Malevich, was the insight that abstraction is a breakthrough to a more essential language in which the principles and powers that rule the cosmos can be expressed more adequately. Goeritz wanted to communicate eternal symbols of the human drama as concretely as possible and found in the *Mensajes* a minimal and effective way to do it. It was also a way for him to relate to the new aesthetics developing in France, Germany and the United States.

INTERNATIONAL QUEST

The international element of this dissertation is formed by Goeritz's work and his artistic interventions in the international scene through his correspondence, writings, and exhibitions in New York, Düsseldorf, and Paris. The *Mensajes* series is a link to Goeritz's involvement or friendship with the New York School, the Zero group from Germany, and the French Nouveau Realisme

In a letter to New York Abstract Expressionist painter Albert Kotin, Goeritz expressed his excitement for his new work, "which is more painting than sculpture."[289] Kotin was one of the American artists closer to Goeritz, and they maintained a rich

[289] Mathias Goeritz, Cuernavaca, México letter to Albert Kotin, New York, N.Y., 1959 Sep 14. Albert Kotin papers, 1935-1977. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

correspondence. Additionally, Goeritz wrote about this new line of work to Heinz Mack and Otto Piene in Germany, founders of the Zero group, and their dealer Alfred Schmela; New Yorkers, such as Dada founder, Richard Huelsenbeck, and architect Philip Johnson; and Paris-based Nouveau Realisme artists Jean Tinguely, Yves Klein, Arman, and their dealer, Iris Clert.

In a letter written to Zero group artist, Otto Piene, he explains:

> Unfortunately, all these detailed and monumental works required many years for completion, either because of lighting or architectonic problems. But I think, at least now, that this activity has "more sense" than my old expositions, because I am in direct personal contact with the public. And perhaps accomplishes a spiritual function (sadly not as clear and relevant as in the Middle-Ages). I have renounced to be an artist and to want to be one. I am tired of building a Mathias Goeritz that in fifty years it's going to be irrelevant to most people. To this situation I add that my "obsession" that seriously it's an ethic one, now must do only with aesthetic. In other words, my real problem is a religious one.[290]

This statement tells us how much Goeritz valued his stained-glass work in religious spaces. It represented a way for his work to be collectively experienced, and he treasured that very much. He fought against the notion of an egocentric artist and that's why he embarked in several collective artistic projects. He thrived in collaboration for this reason. He also shares his religious doubts, never at peace with himself.

According to scholar Garza Usabiaga, Goeritz was critical of the so-called realism of some currents such as the one done by the Nouveau Realisme artists in France, in the

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[290] Goeritz in a letter to Otto Piene, in Christian Schneegass, "El Eco-Hommage a Mathias Goeritz," in *Mathias Goeritz 1915-1990. El Eco. Bilder-Skulpturen-Modelle* (Berlín: Akademie der Kunste, 1992), 215.

sense that their work merely replicated and perpetuated the chaos of everyday life. In a letter to Yves Klein he says,

> In the following issues [of *ARQUITECTURA*] I would like to also have articles on Tinguely, Armand, and Hains. Maybe you can help me—I would be grateful. Personally, I am 'against' their art, but I do not doubt that—in the general confusion of life today—they are the most 'advanced' and most interesting artists of the present moment. Unfortunately, I no longer believe in art as an expression of nihilistic individuality—the negativity itself they advance is in the long run too boring, and only the declaration of the 'Rights of God' can save the situation of modern humanity from its profound spiritual poverty—with all its logic of the 'Right of Man.' The current art is an expression of this splendid misery. Your work goes further. The monochrome has nothing to do with the 'new realism' of others because it possesses the possibility of a metaphysical spirit. It is perhaps the ultimate metaphysical picture. Enough for now! Excuse my language mistakes. My best wishes to you! Warm regards—Mathias Goeritz.[291]

Also, apparent, however, is Goeritz's savvy use of propagandistic methods to position his work and his not always altruistic reasons for being part of an international avant-garde. It is significant, for example, that his work was exhibited in the gallery Iris Clert—the same space that showcased the work of the *Nouveau Realisme* in Paris, and which contributed to the commercial success of artists like Yves Klein. Goeritz's ability to sail the complex networks of transnational art is skillfully shown at the recent exhibition and show book *The Return of the Serpent,* as are his important collaborations with artists in México and abroad. [292]

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[291] Pages two and three of Mathias Goeritz, letter to Yves Klein, July 7, 1960, Yves Klein Archives, trans. Klaus Ottmann, in Philippe Vergne, "Earth, wind, and fire or to overcome the paradox of Yves Klein, the molecular child who wrote to Fidel Castro on his way to Disneyland," *Yves Klein: With the Void, Full Powers* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2011), 65.

This dialogue, carried out in the pages of different publications, like the London-based, vanguard art bulletin *Signals*, where the works were presented under the heading "Constructions of Light,"[293] can be classified as global—and as an antecedent to the present moment. This network of relations at the international level during the start of the second half of the 20th century correspond to the decades when "a global conscience" was beginning to emerge. Goeritz's works, were shown in the United States and European institutions. The *Mensajes Series* were shown at the 1961 *Carnegie International* in Pittsburg; *The Art of Assemblage* at Museum of Modern Art, New York City; and *Aspects de la Sculpture Americaine* in Paris (Figure 23).

Along with the creation of *Mensajes* Series, Goeritz started working on a series of metal sculptures that he titled *Custody* (1961–62). The works were created using recycled materials and found objects of metals, gears, stars, bows and rods. With these materials Goeritz reproduced different representations of the cross. With an admirable simplicity, according to Laura Ibarra Garcia, "these objects of worship express the humility and poverty of archaic Christianity and, thanks to the strength of its content, reach a point in which the limits of the profane and the religious vanish."[294] Maria Elena Duran and Ana Maria Rodríguez elaborate on these series:

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[292] Francisco Reyes Palma, et al. *Mathias Goeritz: El regreso de la serpiente y la invención de la arquitectura emocional* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C. y Fundación Amparo, 2014).

[293] *Signals,* vol. 1, nº. 2 (September 1964): 7.

[294] Laura Ibarra Garcia, *Mathias Goeritz: Ecos y Laberintos* (Ciudad de México: Conaculta/Artes de México, 2014).

> Mathias Goeritz accomplishes in his *Custody* series, a synthesis of his taste, the rigor of abstraction, with the opulent simplicity of forms, always taking into account the tradition of these works and the concrete function that within Catholicism corresponds to these liturgical objects: the center in which the eyes of the faithful converge in an act of adoration [...] [the custodies] are, at the same time, solemn and playful, simple and profound, modern and respectful of tradition, truly successful sculptures that correspond to formal concerns and coming from the art of assemblage.[295]

Goeritz embraced the conception of art as an expression of symbolic meaning. The art object for Goeritz is richly imbued, not merely a plastic form, nor just the conveyor of emblematic significance. It is at once an embodiment of the artist's sensibility, a catalyst for certain modes of experience, and as such it may serve as an instrument of spiritual restoration.

Metachromatic Messages also have the distinction, because of their size, of being made for a domestic setting. Goeritz recommended their use as a decorative and spiritual element in interior settings of modernist architecture.[296] These series of works were also key components of his collaborations with Luis Barragán on interior designs. As stated by Garza Usabiaga, "this kind of decorative work by Goeritz did not have a superficial function. From his point of view, it bore a strong symbolic charge."[297] Goeritz's geometric and abstract solutions attested to "the will of the artist to integrate his language

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[295] Maria Elena Duran and Ana Maria Rodríguez, "Mathias Goeritz: el arte en una oración," in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz*…, 192.

[296] See Goeritz's declarations in Beatriz Colle, "Exposición y Manifiesto de Mathias Goeritz," *México en la Cultura*, supplement of *Novedades*, no. 609, November 13, 1960, 5.

[297] Daniel Garza Usabiaga, "The renovation of art and religious architecture during the fifties and sixties," in *Desafío a la estabilidad: procesos artísticos en México 1952-1967/ Defying stability: artistic processes in México,* ed. Rita Eder (Ciudad de México: UNAM / Turner, 2014), 433.

in the frame of technical-architectural reality."[298] Goeritz philosophy of art included bringing art back into life and involved the task of exploring the transition from two to three dimensions—from painting to sculpture, and then from sculpture to installation. Between the early 1950s, with his work at *El eco*, and the 1960s, the relationship between the two- and the three-dimensional realms was analyzed equally in Europe and the United States. One major transitional device was monochrome paintings. In the 1950s, as seen in the work of Yves Klein, Ad Reinhardt, and others, this genre functioned as a diagram of the sublime, a visual analogue to the philosophical idea of oneness, emptiness, or the void (all concerns share by Goeritz as well). The only thing that mattered was the form in which the presentation took shape as an object, interacting with the space—especially with light and with the spectator—as a reflective surface.

Goeritz stained-glass work and the *Mensaje Series* are bodies of his oeuvre where he continues with his investigations on the spiritual function of art. Goeritz championed the object's transcendental vocation by working with the effect of light in architecture and monochrome to create a spiritual atmosphere. Goeritz spiritual meant to be experienced physically rather than comprehend rationally. He used reflective surfaces to transform the sense of space and mystified the easy categorization of art objects as exclusively painting, sculpture, or architecture.

The next chapter covers *Torres de Ciudad Satélite*. The monumental sculptures break with the nationalist model prevailing in Mexican public sculpture, which was

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[298] Mathias Goeritz, "Aclaración," *Arquitectura/México*, núm. 78 (June 1962): 122.

figurative and not as monumental as *Torres de Ciudad Satélite*. This transformation within the artistic sphere was initially experienced within the field of painting, at the beginning of the 1950s, thanks in great measure to the ideological stagnation into which mural painting had fallen, as well as the contributions of artists such as Rufino Tamayo, Carlos Merida, and Gunther Gerzo, among others.

Chapter IV. Torres de Ciudad Satélite

I understood architecture as immense sculpture. [299]

The second major architectural/sculptural intervention of Goeritz, after *Museo Experimental: El Eco* (1953), is *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* (1957). Starting with the *Torres* project, Goeritz's artistic production expanded to monumental abstract urban sculpture. The urban group of five hollow, wedge-shaped sculptures are located on the northwestern edge of México City. This new work development of his practice expressed further his ideas of emotional architecture. Goeritz as a theorist was interested in creating art and urban planning as a means of elevating the spiritual experience of urban society. Goeritz's purpose was to promote an emotional reaction from public art, like a gothic cathedral had once done.

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on the emotional aspects of Goeritz's *Torres* and to situate the artistic change that his architectural/sculptural work brought to modern Mexican art. While big architectural projects like *Ciudad Universitaria*, were modern in design and facilities, they were still looking to the past in pre-Hispanic layout and ornamentation on public places and monuments. *Torres* broke with that tradition and revolutionized the notion of monumental urban sculpture. In this sense, *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* constitute a point of rupture within the notion of public art with the creation of the first monumental abstract urban sculpture (Figure 24). This Chapter further addresses

[299] Mathias Goeritz letter to Jorge Romero Brest, April 4th 1954, in Andrea Giunta, "Correspondencia entre Mathias Goeritz y Jorge Romero Brest," in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y Testimonios,* eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), 223.

Goeritz's transnational network and writing output that help us in the understanding of his international outreach.

Articulated in 1954, Mathias Goeritz *Emotional Architecture Manifesto* became the dynamic core, theoretical and aesthetic basis of his work. The manifesto is about appealing to the need to imagine spaces, works and objects that cause maximum emotion in modern man, as opposed to functionalism, and individual authorship. Thus, the notions of collaboration, freedom of creation and the recovery of the social functions of design are acknowledged in every work cultivated and produced by Goeritz during these years. In 1960 Goeritz wrote:

> I continue to live with the illusion of a greater art. An art that is disconnected from egocentric individual ambition. Although the word may sound pedantic, I still believe in the WORK OF TOTAL ART. And to reach the greater art, there is only one way: the imposition of the Almighty God.[300]

Artists like Lucio Fontana, Angel Ferrant, among others, are members of the same generation. They question the barbarity of humanity at this point in time, an anxiety about it and the accompanying lost feelings of authenticity and faith in humankind. At the same time, these artists and others decided to have hope, since artworks are symbols of hope, they embody a faith that it makes sense to create, or in more simple terms to make something. According to philosopher Ernst Bloch, "the emotion of hope goes out of itself, makes people broad instead of confining them."[301] In an article penned at that time,

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[300] Confesión (en vez de advertencia) *Arquitectura/México*, núm. 71 (México, septiembre 1960): 170.

[301] Ernst Bloch, *The Principles of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1986), 116.

Jalisco author Olivia Zúñiga states, "*Torres* offered an open-air place of worship…reminiscent of the cathedrals and towers of the past, and at the same time living and breathing expressions of the values and concerns of the present." [302] The author proposes, among other things that *Torres* can be an open-chapel for modern times. Zúñiga who was very close to Goeritz and wrote a monograph of him, had to have hear the previous statement directly from Goeritz. Throughout history, towers have symbolized stability, permanence and magnificence. They elevate man's ideals and place him closer to heaven. They refer, according to Goeritz, to a call to prayer, to an emblem of authority, to power and protection, but also to unrelenting punishment, and arrogance, as in the biblical story of the *Tower of Babel*. Goeritz's verticality conception in a monumental format, tallest tower is 177 feet, offered a mystic aspiration toward infinite outer space.

Some of Goeritz's other urban monumental art projects were the *Route of Friendship*, which will be discussed in Chapter 5, *Pájaro Amarillo, Corona de Bambi, Torres de Mixcoac, Cadigoguse*[303] and *Espacio Escultorico. Route of Friendship, Cadigoguse* and *Espacio Escultorico* were collaborative projects. Although several artists were involved, Goeritz was the founder and leader of the projects.

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[302] Olivia Zúñiga, "Problemas de la arquitectura," suplemento cultural *Novedades Newspaper* (Julio 21 1957). Zuniga wrote, in 1963, one of the first monographs of Goeritz, she was very much in tune of Goeritz's concerns.

[303] *Cadigoguse* (1975-1976) was a collaboration between Geles Cabrera, Juan Luis Diaz, Goeritz, Ángela Gurría and Sebastian, to create five different urban sculptures in Villahermosa, Tabasco. The works were destroyed in 2007 to give way to a new highway.

During his artistic collaborations with Luis Barragán, Goeritz established several iconic projects that emphasized the temporal and immaterial dimensions of architecture. The most important and public of these collaborative projects was *Torres de Ciudad Satélite.* In 1957 Barragán was commissioned to develop an urban entrance for a new subdivision and Barragán, like on other occasions, asked Goeritz to collaborate. With the rapid growth of México City and the rise of a middle class, developers were enticed to build new neighborhoods. I delve into this matter later in this chapter.

Due to budget constraints, the tallest tower of the group of five towers was first reduced from 600 feet to 234 feet and then again to 177 feet. This limited the smallest tower to 102 feet.[304] The *Torres* were placed so that the second-tallest one stood in front of the other four, extending the physical boundary of the work and incorporating the dynamic role of the mobile viewer.[305] Along the inclined site of the square, two roads with three lanes of traffic going downward and one road with three lanes going upward now exist together with access roads on each side. The earliest precedent for Goeritz's well known investigations of towers structures is found in the freestanding yellow wall from *Museo Experimental: El eco,* discussed in length in chapter II. In his *Emotional Architecture Manifesto,* Goeritz had conceived this architectural wall as a "sculptural element, with coloration that he likened to a 'ray of sunlight' within the otherwise black,

[304] These sizes differ a little bit from Curtis, but they came from an article written by Goeritz in "Highway Sculpture: The Towers of Satellite City," *Leonardo* 3, no. 3 (July 1970): 320.

[305] Originally planned to include seven towers, with the tallest one reaching a height of 200 m, the project was scaled down due to budget constraints.

white and gray building."[306] Likewise, he defined the *Torres de Satélite* as "painting, sculpture, (and) emotional architecture."[307] In both examples, Goeritz focused on the monochromatic colorful quality of the wall's surface. A plastic innovation at that time since sculptural work, in the western art world, was limited to bronze and stone with either the dark tones of bronze or the light color of stone.

The ensemble of five *Torres* with triangular floor plans was originally done in a color scheme of orange shades: three in white, one in yellow and one in orange. The *Torres* are without any functionality, and still rank among the most outstanding accomplishments in urban sculpture today.[308] The fact that the *Torres* don't have a function is an important aspect on Goeritz *oeuvre*. By reintroducing subjective experience and emotions into modern art and architecture, *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* are the perfect example of Goeritz ideals, written in several articles, of the power of art as transforming agents within society. The artist's goal was to alter space to provoke an emotional response outside of the parameters of reason and logic. Goeritz opposed the cold rationality of functionalist architecture; the unevenness of the pour lines confirms the status of the *Torres* as hand-crafted objects and where the 'hand' of the artists is an important aesthetic quality.

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[306] Mathias Goeritz, ''Manifiesto de Arquitectura Emocional,'' in *El Eco de Mathias Goeritz,* Leonor Cuahonte ed. (México City: UNAM), 27-30, author's translation.

[307] Mathias Goeritz, *Revista de la Escuela Nacional de Arquitectura*, no. 8/9 (March 1960); quoted in Federico Morais, *Mathias Goeritz* (Ciudad de México: UNAM, 1982), 37.

[308] Fernando González Cortázar, "Las Torres de Ciudad Satélite: cincuenta años de un milagro," in *Las Torres de Ciudad Satélite* (Ciudad de México: Arquine and INBA, 2014), 25.

By focusing on public abstract monumental sculpture, Goeritz attempted to find an identity of his own in an artistic environment in which the Mexican School, immensely influential in establishing a mode of public painting, deeply rooted in the Mexican consciousness dominated. Through works like *Torres,* a narrative is created of the social conditions and relations that arise out of the Mexican modernist project. It is with the medium of sculpture and specifically monumental urban abstract sculpture that Goeritz made his name and radically changed sculpture in México.[309] As art historian Jorge Alberto Manrique stated, "Goeritz, figure and work, was a decisive step on the road to the renewal of the Mexican visual arts. The German artist was the necessary element to break with the previous artistic canon categorically."[310] This renovation, within the artistic sphere, was initially experienced within the field of painting. As mentioned before, in the late nineteen forties, due to the inertia in which mural painting had fallen, easel painting had a renewal spirit with artists such as Rufino Tamayo, Carlos Mérida, Remedios Varo, Leonora Carrington, and Gunther Gerzo, between others. Nevertheless, in the sphere of sculpture, the nationalist dialogue continued to pervade, especially in works related to public places and monuments.

[309] Ferruccio Asta, "Mathias Goeritz y su concepción de la escultura," in *Los Ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y Testimonios*, eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), 90.

[310] Jorge Alberto Manrique, "Mathias Goeritz, el provocador," in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y Testimonios,* eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), 146.

It's useful to go back a few years before Goeritz's *Torres* to contrast his work to his contemporaneous artists. The visualization of public sculpture was an integral part of the large urban projects that were changing the face of the city. Amongst the first generation of sculptors, doing this practice, we have Francisco Zúñiga (1912-1998); Luis Ortiz Monasterio (1906-1990); Oliverio Martínez (1901-1938) and Germán Cueto (1893-1975). Their work reflects the constant search for a sense of identity in national art, rescuing various indigenous elements and then initiating an approach to abstract art, especially German Cueto, who:

> With a good knowledge of vernacular sculptural tradition, Cueto translated the experimentation on the void and managed to integrate the vernacular world in sculpture. Cueto developed sculptural projects, conceived on large scale, and understood that the meaning of sculpture in public space is part of making a double negation. That is, the sculpture is neither architecture nor landscape, but it is precisely this negativity that defines it in all its existence [...] Sculpture is not architecture, but refers to construction to the extent that creates a place and this no longer has dimensions, as it refers to the landscape and its surroundings. [311]

This posture of integrating sculpture to the architectural and urban processes was practiced by Goeritz whose contributions, according to scholars, to urban abstract sculpture are insuperable.[312] Goeritz, according to sculptor and scholar Fernando González Cortázar, was the first sculptor to come up with an urban monumental abstract

[311] Teresa Bosch Romeu, *Germán Cueto, un artista renovador* (Ciudad de México: Consejo para la Cultura y las Artes/ Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1999), 24- 25.

[312] Among others: Garza Usabiaga, Asta, González Cortázar.

art sculpture in close relationship to architecture.[313] Before Goeritz, urban sculptures commemorated the past and were practically grave markers monuments. All the sculptures were of dead historical figures as a remembrance of their past achievements. In contrast, Goeritz conception of urban sculpture was about reintroducing subjective experience and emotions into modern art and architecture.

HISTORY OF A NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT: CIUDAD SATÉLITE

As has already been stated in the previous chapters, from the late twenties decade of past century, architecture in México City experienced important economic growth thanks to the economic development that the country was experiencing. Building construction was intense due to reconstruction after the devastating Mexican revolution. Because of the central government mentality, a high percentage of industries were established in México City and the metropolitan area. This concentration of industry created jobs that enticed a huge migration from the countryside to the main urban centers, in search of better job opportunities**.** This formed a need for new housing developments. Furthermore, the new housing developments needed to be far and outside of downtown México City due to the lack of housing permits in the city.

Ciudad Satélite as a housing development was promoted by a group of México City investors, among them, banker Luis G. Aguilar and former president Miguel Alemán Valdez. Alemán Valdez was the owner of the ranch *Los Pirules* whose lands formed part

[313] Fernando González Cortázar, "Las Torres de Ciudad Satélite: cincuenta años de un milagro," in *Las Torres de Ciudad Satélite* (Ciudad de México: Arquine and INBA, 2014), 25.

of the place where the new development took residence. The area of *Los Pirules* ranch is in the municipality of Naucalpan, outside of México City and situated in the State of México.

The design and construction of this new housing complex was entrusted to the company *Planning and Urbanism Workshop*, led by the architect Mario Pani in collaboration with José Luis Cuevas and Domingo García Ramos. The company was also in charge of the project "Plan Regional North of México City," which consisted of the design and layout of an industrial complex area in Naucalpan, state of México. The goal of this plan was to facilitate, by means of a series of railways and a thoroughfare, trade to the border with the United States. This freeway, opened in 1958, was part of the realization behind the dream of the Pan-American Highway, linking Latin America with the USA. México is in fact the first nation that finished building its part.[314]

Accordingly, Ciudad Satélite would be strategically located at kilometer 14 of the project, facilitating a commute to México City, and enhancing its value in the real estate market, by ensuring its proximity to the metropolitan area of México City. The government of the state of México approved the construction of the new development on January 9, 1957, which had a total area of 800 hectares.[315]

The decision to choose Mario Pani and his team as project leaders, speaks of the

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[314] Wendy Waters, "Remapping Identities: Road Construction and Nation Building in Post-revolutionary México," in *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in México*, 1920 -1940, eds. Stephen Lewis y Mary Kay Vaughan (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 232-235.

[315] Daniel Garza Usabiaga, "Las torres de satélite: Escultura moderna y símbolo de la modernidad," in *Las torres de ciudad Satélite* (Naucalpan: Ayuntamiento de Naucalpan de Juárez, 2006-2009), 63.

fact that this was a very important proposal from the architectural and urban point of view. Mario Pani had already participated in large-scale projects, such as *Ciudad Universitaria* or in the case of housing units like *Centro Urbano Presidente Juárez*, buildings that stood out for their technical style and sense of modernity.[316] This is important because the developers were looking for a modern visual image in their goal of furthering a modern country look.

Modern art and modernism are many things to many people. My own understanding of the concept has been largely shaped by the writings of Raymond Williams, who points out that modernism has a contradictory logic. One of its contradictions is that modernism falsely seems unfixed to time, when in fact it denotes a rather specific period: the early to mid-twentieth century. The word "modern" masks a specific set of tastes and aesthetic preferences, presenting them as though they were all-encompassing of a historical period. Another major contradiction is that while modernism is often tied to claims of "universality" or "wholeness," these ideals mask the reality that the cultural productions of modernism stem from fractures, breakdowns, and particularly local urban roots. Williams also argues that modernism is largely tied to experiences of immigration and exile, built by artists, as Goeritz, and critics who felt foreign in their surroundings.[317] Modernity, in Goeritz case, is understood not only as a plastic renewal

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[316] Goeritz wrote a substantial article, *Centro Urbano Presidente Juárez*, where he praises Mario Pani and Carlos Mérida. See, "La Integración Plástica en el Centro Urbano Presidente Juárez," *Arquitectura/México*, núm. 40 (diciembre de 1952).

[317] Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: against the new conformists* (New York: Verso, 1989), 31-32.

within the discourse of styles, but congruent with the progress of social projects and with the desired creative freedom, seen not as an end in itself but also as an instrument of support for the integration of personal beliefs into the consciousness of the community.

The Banco Internacional Inmobiliario, S.A., which requested the design of the entrance square, commissioned *Torres de Ciudad Satélite*. The square was to have a long, narrow, oval shape with the highway going north on one side and south on the other, and it was to be located below the crest of a hill. In his authoritative study of 20th-century architecture, British architectural historian William J.R. Curtis includes the following description:

> A cluster of shaft-like monumental towers … solid monoliths in reinforced concrete, five in all, rising to 100, 120, 130, 150 and 165 feet respectively. They were triangular in plan, rough in texture, and originally painted in orange, yellow and white. Experienced from the passing car, they shifted into ever-changing alignments, one moment massive and solid, the next planar and immaterial. Ambiguous in size, the ensembles of colored abstract forms generated a field of energy on the scale of the wide central valley of México, and were visible for miles around.[318]

Curtis' statement of the impact and scale of the *Torres* is relevant because it was written in an important survey of 20th century architecture and it was published in English, furthering Goeritz's international outreach. Mario Pani's decision to invite Barragán to design the most important and visible sculpture in the metropolitan area was likely based on Barragán's professional experience in similar housing projects. Barragán

[318] William J. R. Curtis, *Modern architecture since 1900* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1982), 497.

had developed both *Jardines del Pedregal*, in México City, and *Jardines del Bosque* in Guadalajara. Both projects have in common a sculptural work of Goeritz whose monumental sculptures welcome the visitor and more importantly the sculptures served as visual reference and identity of the development. Goeritz sculptures became emblematic of the two developments, *Pedregal* and *del Bosque* and the image of Goeritz's work was used prominently for marketing purposes.

MONOCHROME REFLECTION

The colors of the *Torres* were chosen in collaboration with Chucho Reyes Ferreira. When the *Torres* were painted in 1957, three were in white, one was in yellow and the one in the foreground was in orange (Figure 25). The colors have been changed several times, the municipality of Naucalpan oversees the *Torres* and act as owner of the structure. There are now two white towers, one yellow, one cobalt blue and one orange; Goeritz's favorite color, orange, was his most beloved because, for him, it represented the Mexican sun. White, a color that is long associated with purity and clarity, represents also the depth and diversity that is found in that color. In 1960 the Naucalpan administration ordered to paint one of the white towers in blue. The blue color was an error, according to Goeritz, for it blended with the blue of the sky.[319] By changing the colors in fact, they changed the intentionality of the structure that Goeritz had envisioned with Reyes Ferreira. In iconography, blue represents the sky and transcendence and yellow is a symbol of the heat of the sun. As mentioned in last chapter, blue symbolizes

[319] Mathias Goeritz, "Highway Sculpture: The Towers of Satellite City," *Leonardo,* vol. 3 (July 1970): 322.

the element of faith. It epitomizes, as stated in Wassily Kandinsky book, the belief in blue as a heavenly color, radiating inwards and away from the spectator, thereby creating a desire for the pure and supernatural.[320] The *Torres* have been repainted ever since, but they are now the same configuration as in the mid-sixties: two whites, one blue, one orange and one yellow.

The acute triangular forms of the *Torres de Satélite*, allows them to be perceived as simple planes of color, as pure paintings without material support. Despite their concrete construction, they appear as nearly devoid of mass. The pronounced, yet unevenly spaced; poured lines of concrete generate an illusion of depth, which challenges their flatness. Further, these lines and the triangular form of the towers make the surrounding space seem shorter or taller depending on one's location; Goeritz achieved this effect by exaggerating the perspectival sense, as he had done in the entry corridor of *El eco*.

According to author Thomas McEvilley, "…at about 1960, before the origin of Pop Art, the monochrome painting ceased functioning as a flat symbol of the absolute and became instead a quasi-sculptural object; stripped of all representation except its selfhood, it became the predecessor of Minimalist sculpture as much as Minimalist painting."[321] In the case of Goeritz, his monochrome works, *Mensajes, Stained-glass windows* and *Torres*, can be attributed to Minimalist sculpture concerns. The Carstairs

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[320] Wassily Kandinsky, *Complete Writings on Art*, eds. Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1982), 199.

[321] Thomas McEvilley, *Sculpture in the Age of Doubt* (New York: School of Visual Arts, 1999), 150.

Gallery press release of Goeritz 1962 solo exhibit titled *Mensajes,* references the work as sculpture-pictures. American artists like Brice Marden, Agnes Martin and Ad Reinhardt were working with similar aesthetics. Goeritz corresponded with Reinhardt and saw him on his frequent trips to New York City.[322] What is interesting is that Goeritz was working with comparable artistic matters as Klein and Reinhardt at about the same time.[323] Goeritz's concerns about the monochrome quality were part of the *Torres* project, and chronologically belongs to almost the same time as his *Mensajes Series*.

Goeritz conceived the *Torres* project as a kinetic urban monument to be experienced from a car. In an article written 12 years later, he explained that the *Torres* were arranged so that the second tallest one stood in front of the other four to give an illusion of motion when seen by an automobile driver approaching the square at high speed. ''Indeed, the optical effects produced by this monumental composition when viewed by moving observers in their automobiles are one of the essential features of the work,'' he suggested, and ''should be considered when other highway sculptures are planned.''[324] The form of the five isosceles prisms of reinforced concrete was designed to exaggerate their perspective effect, increase the perception of movement, and provided

[322] Ad Reinhardt papers, 1927-1968. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Collections Online / Reinhardt/Box_0001/Folder_058. Acapulco postcards sent by Goeritz to Reinhardt on January 25th 1963.

[323] Let's not forget that Goeritz work was shown at the Parisian gallery of Klein *Iris Clert* in 1960 and that there is correspondence between the two artists as well as with Reinhardt.

[324] Goeritz, "Highway Sculpture: The Towers of Satellite City," *Leonardo* 3, no. 3 (July 1970): 321.

mobile viewers with a perceptual experience. Perception was a quality close to Goeritz emotional manifesto because it contributes on bringing a different experience.

THE CONTROVERSY OF AUTHORSHIP

At the inauguration of the *Torres* and up to 1968, all the literature, articles, essays, and photographic labels had Goeritz named as sculptor of *Las Torres*.[325] His name always appeared first, before Luis Barragán, who was named as a landscape architect. In a memorandum dated May 27, 1968, Barragán claimed half authorship of the project, [326] and consequently in 1975, Barragán demanded full conceptual authorship.[327]

Since the creation of the Barragán Foundation in 1995, a trend of claiming full authorship for Barragán has been put in place, leaving Goeritz's name as a small footnote. An example of this trend is the 2010 *Modern Architecture A-Z* book. The *Torres* image is used in the cover, but Barragán is the only author that receives a credit line (Figure 26). There is plenty of documentation that this project could not have happened without the collaboration of Luis Barragán and Jesus Reyes Ferreira, but Goeritz was the author of the artistic concept, he was, after all, the only sculptor artist of the group. In 1956, one year before he got commissioned for the project, Goeritz wrote, in the prologue for his exhibition catalog the following: "I would like to have my blocks standing, enormous, like buildings, in a desert landscape, so that people could see them

[325] In many cases only Goeritz name appeared in publications and in other cases his name showed up first and then Luis Barragán.

[326] Mathias Goeritz archive *Fondo Mathias Goeritz*, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara, México.

[327] Luis Barragán, "Arquitecto Luis Barragán y las Torres," *Plural*, no. 47 (México, 1975): 84.

from far away."[328] The art, architectural reviews and architecture books of the late fifties and early sixties gave Goeritz full authorship. The well-documented dispute about final authorship was first made public in the magazine *Arquitectura/México* and has resurfaced in recent years, with authors analyzing the voluminous correspondence between Goeritz and Barragán. Goeritz wrote a response to the article written by Barragán, and another one, five years later.[329] It is now believed by many regarded scholars that Goeritz played the major role in the planning and realization of the Satellite Towers**.**[330] Regarding the controversy, Reyes Palma says that "at the beginning, Goeritz experimental nature and his liking of taking on experiences of other artists, tried to abandon authorship. But here we enter grounds of contradictions. He was a creator who, in a struggle with his own vanity, clung to teamwork. That's why the fate of many of his productions, where expropriated by others and then become part of the authorship of other authors, mainly architects who acted as project coordinators and, by extension, as sponsors."[331] Goeritz foreign condition made him reserved in some instances, especially for the Mexican press.

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[328] Carstairs Gallery exhibition catalogue. Archive *Fondo Mathias Goeritz*, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara, México.

[329] Mathias Goeritz, "Las Torres de Satélite," *Plural* 49 (octubre 1975): 85 and "La verdad sobre las Torres de Satélite," *Plural* 109 (octubre 1980): 41-44.

[330] See Osvaldo Sánchez, ''Mathias Goeritz: The Ministries of Space,'' in *The Experimental Exercise of Freedom,* eds. Alma Ruiz and Rina Carvajal (Los Angeles, CA: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999) as well as Clive Smith Bamford, *Builders in the Sun: Five Mexican Architects* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., Inc, 1967). Keith L. Eggener, "Expressionism and Emotional Architecture in México: Luis Barragán's Collaborations with Max Cetto and Mathias Goeritz," *Journal of the History of Architecture* (January 1995): 83.

[331] Francisco Reyes Palma, "Oratorio monocromático: Los Hartos," in *Los Ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y Testimonios,* eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), 123.

Afraid of bringing too much attention to his work and achievements he thrived in collaborations, but was not fearful to write about it in the international magazines and books. He claimed and wrote about his projects in México for the international audience but retracted to a more passive voice in the national one.

Goeritz and Barragán collaborated successfully for many years and the influence of each other on their work is hard to discern. The argument of this section of the dissertation is more about the authorship of the *Torres* and not so much about who was more talented. They both shared similar formal sensibilities and a phenomenological concern. Barragán's was primarily on his emphasis of the integration of landscape: nature, water, land and architecture. Goeritz had a phenomenological sensibility that was exercised by using scale and voids to create a special mood, and emotion on the viewer. As simply but convincingly stated by art historian Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, "Barragán had a horizontal art conception and Goeritz was obsessed about towers."[332] Goeritz concern for verticality is well known and he wrote about it on several essays. For instance, in 1954 Goeritz wrote a letter to Argentinian intellectual Jorge Romero Brest. In it he expressed: "*I understood architecture as immense sculpture*."[333] In 1956 Goeritz wrote, for his exhibition catalogue at Carstairs Gallery in NYC:

> A human being is for the most part the most essential unit. It has been possible to split the atom but not man. Sometimes I try to

[332] Merry MacMasters, "Piden reconocer a Goeritz como autor de las Torres de Satélite," *Periódico La Jornada,* 24 de junio de 2010.

[333] Mathias Goeritz letter to Jorge Romero Brest, April 4th 1954, in Andrea Giunta, "Correspondencia entre Mathias Goeritz y Jorge Romero Brest," in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y Testimonios,* eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), 223.

> understand him as composed of many pieces. But then again, I feel him as a block. I would like to have my blocks standing, enormous, like building, in a desert landscape, so that people could see them from far away.[334]

The last paragraph of the above statement tells us clearly that Goeritz concern for verticality was well articulated. As many artists do, Goeritz had ideas about future projects, the *Torres* design was conceptualized before he received the commission. In 1970 Goeritz penned for the magazine *Leonardo* an article about the *Torres* and reminiscence about it. As mentioned before, Goeritz possessed a long-held fascination with verticality in art as evidenced in his comments:

> When I was a student, I pinned postcards of the skyline of Manhattan on the wall next to my desk. While visiting Italy in 1937, I bought many photographs of the towers of Bologne and of San Gimignano and ever since then I have been obsessed with the idea of vertical constructions.[335]

Goeritz first built a tower sculpture in 1952-53. A triangular free-standing wall about 37 feet high, placed in the courtyard of the *Museo Experimental: El eco* in México City. This was followed by an exhibition of a series of projects called *Emotional Architecture* at the Proteo Gallery in México City in April 1955. The models he showed were mostly block-like steles

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[334] Mathias Goeritz, *Sculptures and Drawings*, New York: Carstairs Gallery, October 15th - November 3rd 1956.

[335] Mathias Goeritz, "Highway Towers: The Towers of Satellite City," *Leonardo*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Jul., 1970): 319-322.

made of painted wood. [336] The fact that the Mayas closely associated steles with the concept of divine kingship played a special effect on him and his explorations with spirituality. As discussed in chapter I, when Goeritz arrived in México in 1949, one of the first places that he visited was Teotihuacán. Pre-Colombian architecture played a very important role on his work. The pyramids made a lasting impression on him. Their scale and monumentality would remain a lasting influence on his work as the towers of Bologna and San Gimignano were.

Indeed, the works done by Goeritz, at Barragán's invitation, *Animal del Pedregal* in México City, and *Pájaro Amarillo* in the housing development in Guadalajara, became references for each project and Barragán never disputed the authorship of Goeritz. The *Torres* became figuratively speaking bigger that they were due to the international press for the 1968 Summer Olympic Games. According to art historian Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, "Barragán became jealous of all that international attention."[337] Beyond the controversy over the credits of the authorship of the *Torres,* which is common knowledge, there is no doubt that both Goeritz and Barragán considered this work an example of emotional architecture. Its sole purpose is emotional, as Goeritz would say, or poetic, in Barragán's words. The possibility of provoking emotion is centered in the scale of the *Torres* group, and the way they are situated in the landscape. Upon encountering

[336] Steles are monuments that were created by the Mayan civilization. Goeritz had a fascination for Mesoamerican civilizations.

[337] Merry MacMasters, "Omiten su nombre en información sobre el riesgo de esa obra," *Periódico La Jornada* (México City, 24 de junio de 2010): 8.

the works there is a sense of wonder, followed by different emotions. Even now, driving by and encountering *Torres,* produces a feeling of surprise, excitement and interest, all emotions that are part of Goeritz aesthetic goals.

EXPRESSIONISM IN ARCHITECTURE:

Since Goeritz graduated with a doctorate in art history it is probable that he was aware of the Expressionism style of certain 1920s German architects. There are a series of projects associated with this historical art group that remind us of constructions like *Torres de Satélite*. The project of a 1921 skyscraper at Berlin Friedrichstrasse by architect Mies van der Rohe, and the illustration of Peter Behrens for the cover of the number 6 of Das Plakat (June 1920) are a couple of examples.[338] The unrealized building of Mies van der Rohe exists only in a large drawing. The drawing was exhibited as part of the competition for the Berlin project and it was repeatedly reproduced in publications around the world, achieving iconic status. The similarity lies in the verticality of the structures and in its triangular plant. When looking at them straight ahead, they seem to end at a vertex. Within the Expressionist context, these constructions pay tribute to the lines favored by Goeritz and attempted to recover the meaningful medieval effort to unite in them the concept of celestial harmony.[339]

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[338] The Mies van der Rohe project was realized only in a large drawing. It was given to MoMA, New York City, by the architect and I saw it at an exhibition in this museum.

[339] The biographical context of a young Goeritz and the relation to *Torres de Satélite* has been discussed by Peter Krieger, "Las torres de Ciudad Satélite en México. Potencial simbólico, actualidad conceptual del arte urbano de Mathias Goeritz," en *Paisajes urbanos. Imagen y memoria* (Ciudad de México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2006), 185-198.

According to professor and author, Adrian Sheppard, some elements of Expressionist architecture include, "concerns of the movement are patent: expression of angst, subordination of objectivity and realism in favor of symbolic expression of inner experience, abstraction, and a critical position vis-à-vis Modernism. The impulse to distort reality for emotional effect is exhibited in all art forms."[340] Many of these elements are present in the structural design of *El eco* and *Torres.* In architecture, Expressionism emphasized form, abstraction, and the repudiation of modernist rationalist ideals. These elements are part of Goeritz architectonic/artistic language. Goeritz's goal was to produce an architecture of emotion, ambiance, radicalism, and sweeping change. This encouraged expression of subjective interpretation rather than the reproduction of aesthetically pleasing subject matter. The loss of design restraints implied an inevitable dismantling of the immediate past.

Expressionism in architecture became prevalent in Europe in the 1920's and 1930's, but by the end of the decade the movement began to decline. Architects lost interest in the movement and its fixation on the use of expressive forms at the expense of traditional concerns of architecture. Critics dismissed it because it placed too great an emphasis on subjectivity. By the end of World War II, the movement was totally rejected by historians as being irrelevant, eccentric, and out of touch with the Machine Age.[341] It

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[340] Adrian Sheppard, *The Return of Expressionism and the architecture of Luigi Moretti* (Montreal: McGill University, 2016), 1.

[341] In his most influential book, *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941), historian and critic Siegfried Gidieon dismissed Expressionism as peripheral to the development of Modernism. He declared that "Expressionism could have no influence on architecture."

was not until the 1950's that historians such as Henry Russell Hitchcock, Reyner Banham, and Franco Borsi wrote important compendia on Expressionism re-evaluating the pertinence of the movement in a positive way.[342] Goeritz was a consummate reader and his academic art history training in research enriched his ideas in art. Expressionism in architecture ideas enhanced Goeritz conception of art.

TORRES AND THEORY

Beyond the visual effect of the monumentality of the *Torres* in an urban, but empty field landscape, *Torres* also articulated possible mechanisms through which meanings and cultural identities were generated. Roland Barthes explained that no other icon evokes the essence of the metropolis as New York skyscrapers do. *Torres* with their bold colors and textural masonry made for an impactful vision. The *Torres* are rich in further ideological depth. The *Torres* situated between sides of a highway gives the audience of drivers, a public art like a new form of Muralism, seeking out an increasingly modern audience. Further, *Ciudad Satélite* offered its own uniquely Mexican modern future: a space for an auto-commuting middle class, a growing populace signaling México's industrial development and social growth. The *Torres* became representatives of the ambitions and aspirations of their leaders and residents; they are a bold announcement of México's future.

Kenneth Burke's ideas, related to the concepts of Act and Scene with their contemporary terms: Act / Performance and Scene / Site, will guide us on bringing new

[342]*Architecture, Nineteenth and Twentieth Century* (1958); *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (1960); and *Architettura dell' espressionismo* (1967) respectively from the above authors.

insights to this work.[343] Burke focuses on five elements: scene, act, agent, agency, and purpose. He argues that the scene/agent ratio is governed by a principle of dramatic consistency to the point that the scene itself can become a force in the motivation of the action. His analysis of drama can be applied to any event, for example, an anthropologist talks of an event he is not in fact presenting the event but an account thereof. The theoretical and technical problem of anthropology is to construct accounts, to render them comprehensible, and comparable with other events in other times and places. According to Burke, a site can be defined as a piece of social space, a place socially and ideologically demarcated and separated from other places. As such it becomes a symbol within the total and complex system of communication in the total social universe. Social relations are articulated through sites, associated with different messages and ranges of communication. Consider a site as a scene in the sense used by Burke who, in his analysis of drama, stated: "From the motivational point of view there is implicit in the quality of a scene, the quality of the action that is to take place within..., thus when the curtain rises to disclose a given stage-set, this stage-set, contains, simultaneously, implicitly, all that the narrative is to draw out, as a sequence, explicitly."[344] Therefore, a site can be a sculpture so prominent, monumental and emblematic that it became a metaphor for the modernization of México City.

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[343] Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives and a Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945), 6-7.

[344] Ibid, 6-7.

The colossal abstract *Torres de Ciudad Satélite,* merged in the horizon, not only like guardians of a modern future, but in the words of Goeritz, "a monument to faith rather than as a symbol of industrial power."[345] For "it is not true that what we need is to 'accept instability'" decried Goeritz in a flier that he distributed outside New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1960 protesting Jean Tinguely's self-destructive sculpture. "That is again the easy way" he claimed. "We need STATIC VALUES!!!...We need faith! We need God! We need cathedrals and pyramids! We need a greater, a more meaningful art!!"[346] As explained before, his assertion for faith belonged to post-war artists looking to fill a void after the atrocities of World War II.

As all significant works of art, *Torres* offers different readings: It is an artwork made for a viewer on fast moving vehicles; with the scale of a new modern city; artwork that becomes a symbol of a human community; creates reference, gives identity, and marks the city. Goeritz's ideas about monumental urban sculpture were about merging the work with nature; he did not need background for his sculpture. He wanted his sculptures to be the background; Goeritz did not want to interfere, but wanted to enhance what was already there. It was not a question of being unassuming but of joining his creativity to that of the environment on its own terms. Much like light, color, shadows, mist, and rainbows do, in their own time and in their own way, affect the onlooker,

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[345] Christian Schneegaas, ed., *Mathias Goeritz 1915-1990. EL ECO Bilder Skulpturen Modelle* (Berlín: Akademie der Kunste, 1992), 420.

[346] Mathias Goeritz, Please Stop! Manifest circulated at MoMA, New York, 1960.

altering perceptions, transforming surfaces and causing variations of depth, illusion and heightened perspective.

As mentioned before, Goeritz conceived the project as a kinetic urban monument to be experienced from a car. Scholar Peter Krieger give us a good cinematic metaphor:

> The cinematic principle of movement, with its dynamic change of perspectives is a visual condition on the creation of the *Torres de Ciudad Satélite*. That sensorial experienced in films derived in daily perception of the modern citizen; the mobility that dissolves the aesthetic formations of the city. Today, every driver passing through the road by *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* can perceive the spatial image of a set of towers as imagination of the metropolis.[347]

The consideration of a car-driving viewer was also considered by Goeritz in the sculptural projec*t Pájaro Amarillo* (Yellow Bird) executed about the same time as *Torres*. *Pájaro Amarillo* establishes a more direct relationship with the viewer traveling in car. The cars, in fact, pass under a section of the sculpture that although monumental has a much more minor scale than *Torres de Ciudad Satélite.* At the invitation of Luis Barragán, Goeritz created *Pájaro Amarillo* to welcome visitors to the main access road to Jardines del Bosque, a mid-1950s neighborhood development in Guadalajara, Jalisco.

Between 1955 and 1958, Barragán conceived and developed the *Jardines del Bosque* subdivision, a residential area of about one million square meters in the southwest area of the capital of Jalisco. At that time, the subdivision was in the outskirts of the urban area. *Pájaro Amarillo* was installed at the official entrance into the subdivision

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347 Peter Krieger, "Las torres de Ciudad Satélite en México: Potencial simbólico, actualidad conceptual del arte urbano de Mathias Goeritz," in *Paisajes urbanos. Imagen y memoria* (Ciudad de México: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2006), 197.

located at the intersection of Inglaterra and Los Arcos avenues. The abstract representation of a bird in concrete, *Pájaro Amarillo*, which retains its original pavement, is now almost visually lost between the buildings and the avenues that surround it. Today, the sculpture is in overall good condition but has lost its monumentality, a victim of urban development.

Goeritz's *Pájaro Amarillo* is also an example of his vision of modernity, a concept understood within the framework of his proposal of emotional architecture. In the case of Jardines del Bosque, the work provides at least three readings. In the first instance, the *Pájaro Amarillo* proposes a break with the political and realistic orientation that prevailed in the Mexican sculpture of the fifties. Secondly, the sculpture introduced the idea of abstraction as an articulating element of local belonging. Thirdly, a proposal of a new national identity, linked directly with a cosmopolitan cultural discourse.

At the time that the *Torres* were built, the landscape had some trees, but nothing else. The area is now completely urbanized but, at that time, the road passed several miles of open landscape. The viewer driving by the highway that takes you from México City all the way to the north part of the country will be shocked to encounter these huge and tall towers in the middle of nowhere. The effect driving from the north part of the country to México City was probable more impactful. Parallel with this experience on the viewer were many questions like: What is this? What are these towers doing here? With its orderly and balanced straight lines, the work now contrasts with the exuberance and disorder of the huge metropolis. The visual impact of the *Torres* was written by international art critics due to the smart black and white photographs that were sent by

the artist to his international network. The construction of the artistic image of Goeritz was done by his first wife, as she was almost the only photographer of his work.

MARIANNE GAST

In 1942, Goeritz met Marianne Gast in Tangier and married her. A writer and photographer, Gast was born in Schierke, Germany, in 1910, and educated in England and France. A tireless artistic collaborator to Goeritz, she accompanied him in their journeys to Morocco, Spain and then to México. Unfortunately, she died of a brain tumor in 1958. The black and white photographic images that she authored were sent to numerous magazines, shown in art conferences, and mailed to art critics; thus, she contributed largely to the spread of Goeritz's artwork. Most people have experienced the *Torres de Satélite* through photographic reproductions. Gast's photography played an extremely important role in the dissemination of his work and in the iconic status that the *Torres* held on the collective imagination. Its distribution, has affected a much larger audience than the actual sculptures. She photographed Goeritz's works until her death in 1958. Of the twenty years that Goeritz worked, first as editor and then as director of the visual arts section in the magazine *Arquitectura/México*, he used one photograph by Marianne in almost every single issue to illustrate his section. After she died, Goeritz paid homage to her with an article published in *Arquitectura/México* in 1959:

> She was my wife since 1942. Many people thought that she was a cold and arrogant person, she was not. She was very balanced, courageous, honest, pretty and well read. It's difficult for me to describe her. She was a woman with tons of class…she was a gallery director, a writer, translator, cook and above all a photographer. She always took the photos of my paintings, sculptures and architectural works. I was never happy with her work. Thinking that I could do

> better, sometimes I took the camera away from her and took the photos myself. She accepted and thought that I was right. She had a special eye; nowadays I can see that more clearly. We influenced each other. [348]

ESTABLISHING TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS

The magazine *Arquitectura/México,* where Goeritz served as editor of the Visual Arts section from 1959 to1979, will guide us through the art that he was promoting and the artists that he championed. The magazine was founded by Mexican architect Mario Pani in 1938. The magazine allowed Mexican architects to expose their work to the architectural media beyond national borders. In its 119 volumes, the value and development of the discipline was recorded. Goeritz directed the art section for forty-seven issues. In his section, the international avant-garde was very much profiled for the advantage of the young Mexican artists and architects. Goeritz was constantly building his international network and most importantly, for this dissertation, is that in many of his articles he wrote about topics related to faith and the importance of spiritualism in art.

His editorial work is important on the elaboration of some of the facets of Goeritz. As we know, he was not just an artist but an intellectual, writer, art historian, theorist, professor and architect. Goeritz's writings in international magazines like *Leonardo, Phases, Ver y Estimar, Sur,* and his own editorial work at *Arquitectura/México,* where he wrote more than fifty articles, became a vehicle to express his art philosophy and his likes and dislikes. From March 1959-1974 Goeritz served as the founding editor of the art

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[348] Mathias Goeritz, "Marianne," in *Arquitectura/México* No. 68, México (December 1959): 246.

section of Mario Pani's long running magazine. Goeritz's work as correspondent for international publications such as *Meta, Phases,* and *Ver y Estimar* had the effect of opening doors for the reciprocal promotion of his own artistic practice.

From 1965 to 1967 Goeritz wrote 22 letters to Scottish poet and artist Ian Hamilton Finlay.[349] The correspondence deals mostly with contemporary and avant-garde poetry matters, art movements and Finlay's capacity as publisher of Wild Hawthorn Press. The communication shows how deeply Finlay was involved in the concrete poetry movement. In 1967, Goeritz wrote about him in *Arquitectura/México,* "Is the creator of several poetic murals, poems in three dimensions, boats that work as boats and poetry. He is the inventor of many wonderful and absurd things that are very necessary to save this condemned world."[350] Goeritz and Finlay shared, as well, Concrete poetry sensibilities.

Another case in point is the correspondence between Goeritz and French *Nouveau Réalisme* star Yves Klein. Author Philippe Vergne writes about the exchanged letters in 1960 between Yves Klein and Goeritz. Vergne refers to *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* and the aesthetic of which seems to match Klein's desire to "raze everything on the surface of Earth, until it is flat and fill valleys with mountains and then pour concrete all over the continents."[351] Goeritz was interested in publishing an article on Klein in the magazine

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[349] The letters are at the Ian Hamilton Finlay archive in Wild Hawthorn Press in Scotland.

[350] Mathias Goeritz, "Ian Hamilton Finlay," in *Arquitectura/México*, núm. 98 (tercer trimestre 1967): 147-149.

[351] Philippe Vergne, "Earth, wind, and fire or to overcome the paradox of Yves Klein, the molecular child who wrote to Fidel Castro on his way to Disneyland," in *Yves Klein: With the Void, Full Powers* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2010).

Arquitectura/México. In an intriguing letter, Goeritz explained that he believed Klein's work was the antidote to nihilistic individuals and that it went beyond *Nouveau Réalisme*, offering the possibility of a new metaphysical framework.[352] This interchange and Goeritz's interest in Klein's work demonstrates the influence of the artist's thinking beyond his artistic outputs, and the ways in which his ideas not only challenged prevailing notions of what constituted art, but also extended to the world of experimental architecture.

The exchange of letters between Goeritz and Jorge Romero Brest (1905-1989) is copious. Romero Brest was an Argentinian intellectual, art critic and editor of the magazine *Ver y Estimar* (See and Appraise). Scholar Andrea Giunta published a book of their correspondence that gives the reader a window into their way of thinking and the way they discussed art. Romero Brest and Goeritz shared a believe on a progressive evolution toward abstraction and supported a project of renewal for Latin American art and its advancement in the evolutionary map of modernity that American art historian Alfred H. Barr, Jr., had defined in 1936. For Romero Brest and Goeritz such progress was represented by abstraction.[353] Romero Brest was instrumental in establishing artistic relationships between Brazil and Argentina while dialoguing with art personalities in other countries, amongst others: Max Bill in Switzerland, Ferrer in Spain and Goeritz in México.

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[352] Mathias Goeritz," Pages two and three of Mathias Goeritz, letter to Yves Klein, July 7, 1960, Yves Klein Archives, trans. Klaus Ottmann.

[353] Andrea Giunta, *Goeritz/Romero Brest: Correspondencias* (Buenos Aires: Julio E. Payro, 2000).

Because of Marianne's illness, she had gone back to Germany, Goeritz traveled back to Europe for the first time after the war. The trip coincided with his new position as director of a new visual arts section for *Arquitectura/México*, a position that would help him expand his international intellectual network, as well as the promotion of his work abroad. [354] While in Düsseldorf, Germany, he established a relationship with gallerist Alfred Schmela (1918–1980), one of the champions of the avant-garde in Germany, with the artistic group Zero, a relationship that would be beneficial to both. Several letters penned by Goeritz are on the Schmela archives at the Getty Research Institute.[355] In one letter dated October 4th, 1958, Goeritz writes the names and addresses of Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, Albert Kotin and Robert Motherwell, recommending Schmela to visit their studios on his next New York City trip.

A good example of Goeritz beneficial networking thru the magazine is the relationship he developed with Swiss multifaceted artists Dieter Roth, (1930-1998). Roth belongs to the post-war European art scene that included Joseph Beuys, Yves Klein, and others who experimented with unorthodox techniques and who generally tried to blur the boundaries between performance and sculpture. It is through Concrete poetry that Goeritz and Roth became acquaintances. Since 1955, Roth had worked on book projects that he titled ideograms. These projects, also known as Concrete poetry artist's books, are where

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[354] Goeritz directed the section for almost 40 issues between the years of 1959 and 1974.

[355] See Goeritz's correspondence with Alfred Schmela, 1958–62. Galerie Schmela records, 1923–2006, box 3, folder 25. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Accession no.860297

color, shape, form, and typography are the most important elements. Roth ideogram was published in 1959, in the 2nd volume of the *Material* magazine, and edited by Daniel Spoerri.[356] From this volume of the magazine, Ida Rodríguez Prampolini wrote about Roth's *ideograme* in an essay for *Arquitectura/México*. Goeritz sent this number to Roth, giving rise to an intense epistolary exchange. In 1952, Roth collaborated, on a Concrete poetry Art project, as a partner with the poet and publisher German typographer Hansjórg Mayer. Roth introduced the work of Goeritz to Mayer and in 1964, Mayer, visited México and stayed at the house of Goeritz. The result of this meeting was the creation of two projects: an international exhibition of concrete poetry that took place at Gallery Aristos, UNAM México in 1966, and the series "future" where Mayer published in 1965 *die goldene botschaft*, of Goeritz, along the works of Brazilians Noigandres group. The Concrete exhibition in México, curated and organized by Goeritz, was the first one in Latin America.

Another creative outlet of Goeritz was his prolific correspondence. His output is remarkable. In the artist's Cabañas archives, I have found letters written to Henry Moore, Barbara Rose, Magdalena Abakanowicz and others.[357] Throughout his lifetime, Goeritz had a network of correspondents in Europe and America with whom he exchanged letters, photographs, graphic objects, collages, documentation of works, postcards,

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[356] Dieter Roth, *ideograme* for *material 2: dieter roth*. 1959. Lithograph, offset printed, page: 8 1/4 x 8 1/4" (21 x 21 cm). Publisher: Daniel Spoerri, Darmstadt. Printer: unknown. Edition: 200. The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York.

[357] See Goeritz agenda from 1960, Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara

magazine cuttings, photocopies, seals, stamps, etc.—all by mail. Goeritz's correspondence was sent back and forth, dispersed throughout Europe and the America's. He had a very active exchange with the Brazilian concrete poets Augusto de Campos, Haroldo de Campos, and Décio Pignatari, the Swiss poet Eugen Gomringer, the German typographer Hansjörg Mayer, the Swiss artist Dieter Roth, and many other artists who were involved in the mail art movement. Goeritz's detailed "Week-at-a-Glance" agendas, held in Guadalajara's Instituto Cultural Cabañas, are excellent vehicles to chart a constellation of his important international network. Goeritz's archives reveal the strong international network that the artist fostered.

International exchange was always present in Goeritz's work. Working tirelessly on essays that were published internationally, letters to a network of international intellectuals, the organization of transnational exhibitions and symposium were part of his daily schedule. A polyglot, he communicated with editors, museum directors and curators of the main capitals of the world.[358]

LA REGIÓN MÁS TRANSPARENTE: WHERE THE AIR IS CLEAR

The same year that the *Torres* were completed, Carlos Fuentes published his first novel, *La Región más Transparente* (1958). Fuentes presents a model of relating to urban popular culture that on one hand is celebratory and at the same time presents the reader with dystopian visions by presenting an undesirable world. This novel and *Torres* shared

[358] Another case in point was his intervention as advisor to Thomas M. Messer for the *Emergent Decade: Latin American Painters and Painting in the 1960's* a 1968 Guggenheim exhibit.

an urban theme, a topic that has not been used as a protagonist before. According to scholar Steven Boldly, *Where the Air is Clear* is the novel par excellence of México City.[359] In it Fuentes presents a vast panorama of the types and issues of the emerging modern city of the 1950s. It also has the distinction of having a metropolis, México City, as its main character and is a character who questions the dystopian society of the era. Fuentes, with a characteristic irony, borrows his title from a phrase that the late Alfonso Reyes used to describe the once clear air of the Valley of México, and shows how the deep and complex forces working within the Mexican psyche make it anything but transparent.[360] This novel offers a strong critique of the shortcomings of the revolution and puts to rest, at least for a while, the controversy between cosmopolitism and nationalism. Many of the novel characters belonged to the new wealthy business class. A class that it's distinguished by their international tastes and travels. Many of them living in modern houses, on new developments, like Ciudad Satélite, where *Torres* is located. When the book was published it was criticized for its structural chaos, a book that jumped arbitrarily back and forth in time. In retrospect, we now understand that the chaos in the novel is a reflection on the reality of one of the largest metropolitan cities in the world.

At the time of publication many readers found unreasonable the dystopian conditions that Fuentes gave to México City. Time is on the side of the author because the City, as we all know, is uncontrolled, violent, and inexplicable to most. Fuentes gives

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[359] Steven Boldy, "Facing up to the other: Carlos Fuentes and the Mexican identity," *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 10 no. 1 (Jan. 1988): 289.

[360] Alfonso Reyes, *Visión de Anáhuac y otros ensayos* (Madrid: Índice, 1923).

voice to the lives of the dispossessed and the migrant workers. He uses characters like Gladys, a sex-worker, as an example, of those who live on the margins of all great cities, at extremes of poverty and misery in the shanty towns of México City. The novel offers the reader a sympathetic representation of working class *Colonias* like Guerrero and Doctores where his characters like the taxi drivers, sex workers, and migrants to the city live and work. All these characters are endowed with cultural 'authenticity', in comparison to the upper-class ones that are treated like superficial and greedy types. The novel's working-class characters devalue their own lives and accept adversity with resignation. Gladys Garcia, the *fichera,* is the philosopher and spiritual center of this group. In one scene, she asks Beto, a taxi driver, if he "ever noticed people like us, that they're like a flood, they pour along the streets and markets, all just like us, and they have no voices." [361] But the novel's structure emphasizes repeatedly that these people are the only ones who have an authentic voice and that are intimately tied to México City as a place. Fuente's Colonia Guerrero is a compelling account of a chaotic mixture of noise, smells, garbage, profanity, sex and commerce, all elements that illustrate his emphasis on portraying dystopian elements of México City. Fuentes leaves his readers suspended between a world ruled by profound mythological rhythms, and an alternative, modern world of drift and possibility, like the one promised by the developers of Ciudad Satélite. He never fully decides which of these two pictures is finally truer to the reality of México. This same conflict shapes the meditation on identity and authenticity that

[361] Carlos Fuentes, *Where the Air Is Clear*, trans. Sam Hileman (New York: Ivan Obolensky, 1960), 160.

receives novelistic form through the contrasting careers of Ixca Cienfuegos and Rodrigo Pola. This conflict can be applied to the dichotomy of México between identity/ nationalism and cosmopolitism, same debates as the one discussed regarding the aesthetics of *Torres* vs muralism. The treatment of Federico Robles can signify the corruption and incompetence of Mexican business leaders with their self-interest and materialism. The novel also succeeds in the depiction of people trapped in ever-shrinking neighborhoods, invisible to the country's leaders and incapable of self-representation.

This hostile environment that Fuentes's presents can be described as a dystopia place for some and a crude reality for others. According to governmental sources, the growth of the metropolitan population of México City was 424% from 1940 to 1970; a population growth from 1,758,000 inhabitants to 9,211,000.[362] Fuentes' novel is written halfway between these three decades. Indeed, they were the decades of the most explosive growth, and Fuentes could capture and present us with a critical dystopia of the different crisis of an unplanned, unorganized, and tragic growth.

NATIONAL IDENTITY

A very important element in this discussion is the search for a new national modern identity through abstract art. The idea of national identity is a construct, a mutable, fictional unity masking real internal variance and conflict. Each generation reconfigures this construct according to its own multifaceted needs and aspirations. At various times, the process becomes impassioned, convoluted, and pervasive. In the

[362] Miguel Ramirez, "México," in *The Political Economy of Latin America in the Postwar Period*, ed. Laura Randall (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 118-20.

decade and a half following World War II, as its northern neighbor, rose to international military, political, economic, and cultural preeminence, and much of the rest of the world chose sides in the Cold War, a new cultural configuration took place in México. This process, resulted in what anthropologist Roger Bartra has called "an extraordinary boom" in speculations about Mexican national identity.[363] Bartra argues that Mexicans live between two worlds. His description reflects the complex distinctions of modern Mexican culture, both the embracing of an exhilarating utopia and the introspection of a haunted mystic past:

> This image of an amphibian culture, which must never decline into self-denigrating mimicry or extreme nationalism, is, from the middle of the twentieth century, offered as a role model; it has the additional attraction of permitting the Mexican to peer out of the abyss of the existential drama and feel the vertigo of the modern age.[364]

The foreign condition of Goeritz allowed him to navigate and swam out of dangerous currents. One of the survival mechanisms that he used was to embrace anonymity and fostering artistic collaboration. He wrote about the ideal of unrecognized Middle-Ages artists but thinking critically it could have been a façade. The logical question is: why did he push a different agenda on his international writings? Undeniably, he wrote about his artistic projects in international magazines and hosted innumerable international art and architecture critics, writers, curators and artists.

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[363] Roger Bartra, *The Cage of Melancholy: Identity and Metamorphosis in the Mexican Character*, trans. Christopher J. Hall (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 5.

[364] Ibid, 94.

Artists, intellectuals, and politicians debated what philosopher and historian Paul Ricoeur would at this same time call the core problem of post-colonial societies: that of balancing modernization and a role in contemporary "universal civilization" with the need to "return to sources," to recover and assert a personality distinct from that imposed by the colonizer.[365] As Mexican author and poet Octavio Paz wrote in his book *The Labyrinth of Solitude*:

> The Revolution began as a discovery of our own selves and a return to our origins; later it became a search and an abortive attempt at a synthesis; finally, since it was unable to assimilate our tradition and to offer us a new workable plan, it became a compromise. The Revolution has not been capable of organizing its explosive values into a world view, and the Mexican intelligentsia has not been able to resolve the conflict between the insufficiencies of our tradition and our need and desire for universality.[366]

Goeritz's artistic innovation in creating *Torres de Ciudad Satélite*, a monumental hybrid of architecture-sculpture, with clear contours, without ornaments, no stairs, and more importantly no functionality, caused a cultural debate about modern identity in México in the '50s and '60s. In the 1940s, México City's population had doubled, and discussions of modernization in architecture were not uncommon. This debate entailed more than a discussion regarding an aesthetic architectural project; indeed, at that moment in history, the beginning of the 1950s, the image of a modern nation to the world was also at stake.

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[365] Paul Ricoeur, "Universal Civilizations and National Cultures," in *History and Truth*, trans. Charles A. Kelbley (Evanston: Northwestern University Press: 1965). Similar terms had been applied to México as early as 1934 by Samuel Ramos in his *Perfil del hombre y la cultura en México* (México: Imprenta Mundial, 1934).

[366] Octavio Paz*, Return of the Labyrinth of Solitude, México and the United States, and The Philanthropic Ogre* (New York: Grove Press, 1985), 31.

The *Torres*, with their futuristic and avant-garde language, became a representation of modern México City.

Modernism[367] in architecture appeared on the Mexican scene after remarkable turning points, that is, in the aftermath of the revolution with the introduction of nationalist economic development programs, and in some cases, the installation of authoritarian regimes seeking legitimacy through public works. The rise of a modernist architecture in México only within a few years of its appearance in Europe was somewhat of an improbable event given the region's relative backwardness. Like Spain during the 1930s, México represents an example of "modernism without Modernity," of countries whose intellectual and cultural life was well ahead of economic and technological realities.[368] The modernist materials *par excellence*, glass, steel, and reinforced concrete, were not widely available in México before World War II. Moreover, to the present day about 60 percent of all dwellings are erected by their own occupants, and only 10 percent

[367] The conflictive meaning of the word Modernism has been explored by numerous scholars and thinkers, but nobody expressed it as brilliantly as Raymond Williams in his lecture, *When was Modernism?* "My title is borrowed from a book *When was Wales?* That was a historical questioning of a problematic history. My own inquiry is a historical questioning of what is also, in very different ways, a problem, but that is also a now dominant and misleading ideology. 'Modern' begins to appear as a term synonymous with 'now' in the late sixteenth century and in any case used to mark the period off from medieval *and* ancient times…in the nineteenth century it began to take on a more largely progressive ring; Ruskin's *Modern Painters* was published in 1846, and Turner becomes the type of modern painter for his demonstration of the up-to-date quality of truth-to-nature. Very quickly, 'moderns' shifts its reference from 'now' to 'just now' or even 'then.' Modernism as a title for a whole cultural movement and moment has then been retrospective as a general term since the 1950s, thereby stranding the dominant version of 'modern' between, say, 1890 and 1940. We still habitually use 'modern' of a world between a century and half old." Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (New York: Verso, 1989, 2007), 31-32.

[368] Ramón Gutiérrez, "Arquitectura latinoamericana: Haciendo camino al andar," in *Arquitectura latinoamericana en el siglo XX*, ed. Ramón Gutiérrez (Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, 1998), 17-39.

are designed by architects.[369] The material that Goeritz chose was reinforced concrete, the material that had played an important role in the modernity of México. After nearly a decade of civil war, cement quickly emerged as the government's preferred building material for its projects, including schools, office buildings, factories, markets and stadiums. Goeritz works such as the large urban sculptures *Pájaro Amarillo*, and especially *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* acquired greater weight, since it breaks with the nationalist public sculpture model prevailing, at that time.

TORRES AS BACKDROP OF ADVERTISEMENT CAMPAIGNS

The graphic image of the *Torres* was used in numerous marketing campaigns: from advertisement sales campaigns for houses in Ciudad Satélite,[370] through the visit of American President John F. Kennedy and continuing with the advertising of products that were significant in a modern society, such as cars and typewriters (Figure 27). In all these campaigns, the images of the *Torres* were integrated with representations of modernity such as auto-cinema and street lighting,[371] as well as an important role within the cinematographic field.[372]

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[369] Humberto Eliash and Eduardo San Martin**, "**La vivienda social y la construcci6n de la periferia urbana en America Latina," in *Arquitectura latinoamericana en el siglo XX*, ed. Ramón Gutiérrez (Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, 1998), 53-64.

[370] "The morning came earlier than expected," home advertisement for Satellite City with *Torres* prominently illustrated. Full page newspaper *Excélsior*, August 2, 1958.

[371] References taken from the Mathias Goeritz archive, CENIDIAP-INBA.

[372] The 1973 cult movie *La montaña sagrada*, of avant-garde director Alejandro Jodorowsky, is an interesting example.

A discussion takes place between the symbolic nature of Goeritz's work, his intentions of creating *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* as modern renditions of Gothic towers, as well as the emblematic nature of an industrialized urban utopia. Caught between marketing and "Prayer-art," *Torres* encapsulates the tensions between his proposed spirituality and the potential commerciality of his work. A prospective enhanced by his non-figurative production, which aligned Goeritz, and postwar abstract art in general with Western capitalism.[373] Furthermore, Goeritz's proclamation of *Torres* as a cathedral complex came to be construed as commerce cathedrals by German Mexican architect Max Cetto who compared *Torres de Satélite* with advertisement columns.[374]

A series of *Torres de Satélite* advertisements contribute to our understanding of signification process. The *Torres* were used in the promotion of an American middle-class life style in modern México of the fifties and sixties. For example, the presentation of a full-page ad regarding housing in 1958 Satellite City. The title of the ad: "*El Mañana llegó antes de lo esperado*," (tomorrow arrived earlier than expected).[375] By evoking a/the Manhattan modern life style, the ad published in *Excélsior* newspaper, highlights *Torres de Satélite* as a promise to a Mexican consumer that they can also aspired to the United States living standards. Another case in point is the full-page ad, also in *Excélsior*

[373]Among Mexican architects of the period, Barragán was probably the first to become aware of the commercial potential that architecture's reproducibility in other media offered to his practice. See Keith Eggener, "Barragán's 'Photographic architecture': Image, Advertising and Memory," in *Luis Barragán: The Quiet Revolution*, ed. Federica Zanco (Milan: Skira, Barragán Foundation, 2000), 178-195.

[374] Max Cetto, *Modern Architecture in México* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1961), 31.

[375] *Excélsior,* August 2, 1958.

newspaper, commemorating the visit of President John F. Kennedy to México in 1962. The ad has a large portrait of the president and next to it an illustration of *Torres de Satélite.* The ad also includes a welcoming text from Ciudad Satélite to President and Mrs. Kennedy. It signified that President Kennedy validates Ciudad Satélite, that the neighborhood has the seal of approval from President Kennedy. This usage of the image of President Kennedy next to a promotion of real estate could only have been possible because the main owner of *Ciudad Satélite* was former Mexican President Miguel Alemán.

A dichotomy is present between what Goeritz wrote about *Torres* as visual prayers, and the fact that *Torres* were built to attract public attention to sell lots in this development. Let us not forget that a private consortium commissioned Goeritz to create a public symbol of the new development. There is a commercial foundation since the project started. On the other hand, Goeritz was effective because *Torres* became iconic and a reference of modern architecture. The artist succeeded because the public thinks of *Torres* as emblematic and they do not get associated with the initial purpose that was selling parcels.

The modern significance of the *Torres* was articulated again in 1967 at international campaigns promoting the Olympic Games of 1968. For example, the German press used the image of the *Torres* next to the pre-Hispanic pyramids, comparing

their monumentality and using them as symbols of modern skyscrapers.[376] I elaborate on the appropriation of Goeritz's *Torres* on chapter V of this work.

TORRES AS SKYLINE MARKER

Tall buildings give cities identity through 'skyline,' an identifiable array of icons that provide orientation for walkers and drivers, and narrative markers for urban historians. They have played an important role in the visual history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries via countless films, postcards and advertisements. They also provide a poignant reminder of visibility in society, both powerful, who buy, sell, design or promote the buildings, and of the hidden laborers who construct and maintain them. The invention of the skyscraper form has dwarfed the ecclesiastical or regal dominance of many city skylines, not least when topped with a neon corporate logo. This narrative draws rightful attention to other forms of skyline markers (churches, mountains, communication towers, for example) that challenge the skyscraper. For example, Saint Paul's Cathedral dome in London, or Paris Eiffel Tower, limit or divert the zoning for new skyscraper office buildings. *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* are a significant skyline marker for México City and its narrative. Goeritz's *Torres* evokes images of a metropolis and representations of modernity and, according to Juan Bruce-Novoa, "they rivaled *Ciudad Universitaria* as a representational image assuming the status of national

[376] The cover of the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, January 8, 1968, is titled "Olympia-Land Mexiko."

metaphor."[377] The architecture that would come to be recognized internationally as the Mexican style has more in common with Goeritz's *Torres* than with any of the other major state buildings. Their monumentality borrows from pre-Hispanic architectural style(s) that influenced Goeritz from the first time that he saw the Teotihuacan pyramids. The *Torres* possessed a new modern abstract aesthetic but, with their monumentality, they relayed something very symbolic for Mexicans: their pre-Hispanic heritage. Goeritz's artistic language, as well as that of the international avant-garde, spoke of visual and social renewal; the *Torres* symbolized a transformation and a new urban culture and became the modern face of the Mexican state while encapsulating the collective hopes of modernity.

Doreen Masey, one of the most respected contemporary thinkers in the field of Geography, exposes the challenges and the potential of space in her book *For Space*. Massey argues not only that "the spatial is political," but also that thinking about the spatial "in a particular way can shake up the way certain political questions are formulated, can contribute to political arguments already under way, and—most deeply—can be an essential element in the imaginative structure which enables in the first place an opening up to the very sphere of the political." [378] Fundamental to architect historian's argument is a hierarchical distinction between 'true' skyscrapers and mere tall buildings.

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[377] Juan Bruce-Novoa, "Mathias Goeritz: Emotional Architecture and Creating a Mexican National Art," in *The Effects of the Nation: Mexican Art in an Age of Globalization*, eds. Carl Good and John V. Waldron (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 48.

[378] Doreen Masey, *For Space* (London, Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2005), 10.

The latter are just vertical objects that do not carry the civic responsibilities of true skyscrapers. True skyscrapers, and in this case *Torres*, are charged with representational responsibilities to act, by their towering height, as markers of place, sculptors of the city silhouette and as conveyors of public image. They must not finish abruptly in the flat top of modernist glass boxes, but culminate in a celebratory gesture. In this sense, the skyscraper has always played a role in the representational strategies of financial and political elites to endow their city or nation with a projected self-consciousness.

Given its dramatic proportions and striking visual impact, the *Torres* have become a central actor in films and settings as diverse as Alejandro Jodorosky's 1972 cult movie *La Montaña Sagrada*. The *Torres* appear prominently in this psychedelic road trip movie. This film has a mixture of Buddhist and Catholicism mysticism, 1970s counterculture excesses, and Dada absurdism shows an unnamed protagonist that is hoisted up the red *Tower*, which he then enters via a circular hole in its side. The image of the *Torres* often blends into advertising campaigns. They have served as backdrops to *Datsun* cars and *Monroe* computers, among other products, marketing campaigns. Their image represented on billboards, television commercials and magazine advertisements alike. He proclaimed that "for me, cities should be cathedral complexes."[379] Goeritz conception of the *Torres* did not have in mind all these associated commercialisms.

The idea of the skyscraper as being central to the narration of urban history of cities, the idea that they possess biographies, is evident in a range of publications that tell

[379] Manuscript of speech, undated, acceptance of the Elias Sourasky prize, at Fondo Mathias Goeritz, Cenidiap-INBA.

the history of single buildings/projects. In the case of *Torres* there are three prominent ones: Daniel Garza Usabiaga book of 2009, *Las Torres de ciudad Satélite;* the 2014 book with the same name by Fernando González Cortázar and the 2012 published book by the name of *Satélite, el Libro* by Fernando Llanos, et al. These are three examples of this mode of urban writing, two biographical forms are fused: the idea that the *Torres* is somehow representative of a historical narrative of the city and of the life stories of property developers, politicians and architects.

Author Tuan points out that our attachment to, and the meaning of, place is a function of time, and that quality and intensity of experience through movement contributes to our "sense of place." He examines such concepts as rootedness, veneration of the past and nostalgia, and associates them with our need to identify with a locality and homeland. On the micro level, he examines how built forms can contribute to human feeling and perception of place and posits that architecture, like language, is a key to our comprehension of reality.[380] All the creations of Goeritz*'s* are referred by him as monuments to a tradition of religious worship for the exaltation of spiritualism and emotional qualities. Recent research has revealed conceptual connections between Goeritz's aesthetics and the spirituality of Russian Suprematism.[381] Because of their

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[380] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1977).

[381] Pavlioukova and Soto, "The Tower theme in the work of Mathias Goeritz," in Christian Schneegass ed. *Mathias Goeritz 1915-1990. El Eco.Bilder-Skulpturen-Modelle* (Berlin: Akademie der Kunste, 1992), 143-149.

visual and metaphysical qualities *Torres* are still referents in the modern architecture narrative. Against a confusion of modernity, Goeritz presented a utopic emotional artistic expression that has been able to stay relevant.

Torres de Satélite serves as a visual manifesto of Goeritz's views on art as expression or "emotion," rather than pure formal abstraction, and his belief that modern art should seek inspiration in the past. Architecture historian Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, referring to Goeritz's vision as exemplified in the *Torres de Satélite, s*poke of the "Obelisks of Luxor, the spires of a cathedral, the towers of a Lombard stronghold, the forest of chimneys in a great production center, or the skyscrapers that announce America to the seafarer. No one lives in these towers and no one can climb up inside them. They are wasteful, prideful, beautifully durable exclamation marks of human ambition."[382] Indeed, ancient echoes run through his work adding to the emotive and spiritual content. Goeritz would change the face of public sculpture in his adopted country by recapturing the magnitude and solemnity of ancient pre-Hispanic art. The concept of permanence, so close to Goeritz's philosophy, applied to his urban sculptures and to religion as well, after all, nothing ephemeral about religion.

THE TORRES AS EMBLEMS OF A MODERNISTIC FAILURE

When comparing the original *Torres* project with the present condition, the question is: what happened? The visibility of the whole project, as well as its effect and

[382] Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, *Matrix of Man: An Illustrated History of Urban Environment* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 303.

verticality, has been disrupted since a pedestrian bridge was built at the end of the 1960s. Today, elevated highways pass right by its sides (Figure 28). Since some years ago, the *Torres* live a process of frank deterioration. Its original landscape has been buried by construction chaos, and its platform has been reduced by the arteries of vehicular circulation. By looking at *Torres* nowadays we can say it is a monumental failure of an art project. It's a bit like encountering an ancestral pyramid in a jungle. The jungle has buried lots of the old structure. In a way *Torres* have been concealed by the concrete jungle with bridges, horrible monumental advertisement, and electronic cables everywhere. It is sad to think that at a certain moment in time, *Torres* represented the collective wishes for a better future, a time that never materialized.

CONCLUSION

Goeritz reaffirmation of his beliefs in art as a transformative element was repeated constantly on his letters and essays. Goeritz's utopic idea from the very beginning was to make a monumental statement. He envisioned the visitor reaching México from afar and noticing the *Torres* in a similar fashion to the *Statue of Liberty*. After all, they are located on the main highway that takes you to the north part of the country and to the United States. But what do the *Torres* tell us? What are the stories? The *Torres* shared, to the viewer, a sense that everything is possible. The sense of optimism is projected with the idea that the nation can construct a new city and create new development centers. That was then and that's the reason that the *Torres* became iconic in an aspirational country.

Chapter V: Manifestos and Ruta de la Amistad

I think that
the artist, instead of concentrating on his independent
and non-conformist genius, should admit that
his works are nothing but isolated, temporary
designs or expressive spots on the wall and
that all the rest is vanity, propaganda or business.

Mathias Goeritz, Art is dead! Leonardo, Vol. 1, No. 2 April 1968, 220

This chapter includes a reading of Goeritz's 1960s manifestos, and other writings, where Goeritz reiterates the spiritual function of art. Goeritz's manifestos and performances became part of a disruptive method to express himself and to further his international agenda. The chapter also includes a reflection on his most visible collaborative project, *The Route of Friendship,* and the appropriation of this project image, as well as the work of *Torres de Ciudad Satélite,* by a State that needed to promote the idea of a modern country. México in the 1950s and 1960s needed to highlight to the world that it was not the country of *mañana* (leaving what should be done today to tomorrow) but a modern country.

Many artists, with circumstances like Goeritz, working in the aftermath of the war, sought a formal language that might transcend national and regional narratives. Building on the legacies of early twentieth century modernism, artists in the postwar period—a period marked by recent trauma, migration, and reconstruction—found new urgency for their abstract impulses. As discussed in Chapter I, Goeritz used the rationalization of geometry and the disruptive potential of new materials and process as part of his practice. Goeritz continued with the importance of emotion in his artwork until

the end of his career. His aesthetic creed did not change. In fact, he became more vocal against art he considered presumptuous and superficial. His manifesto writings, coded with emotional and religion insights, offered the reader a window into his thought process. Goeritz wrote four manifestos between 1960 and 1961. He had only written two before the 1960s and would write two more in the late 1970s. What triggered this enthusiastic output? The four manifestos written between 1960 and 1961 coincided with international exhibits of his *Mensajes Series* in New York City, Paris and México City. The artist wrote the two first ones of 1960, in New York and Paris respectively. In addition, Goeritz turned forty-five in 1960 and that gave him extra energy to create a transcendent and passionate writing production. Perhaps the international attention, that he received, due to his *Torres* project played a part; his work was featured in many and important journals, and was exhibited in several international institutions. More importantly, his foreign trips to art capitals allowed him to witness an expanding art market, something that he was against to. Written in a tone of Christian conviction, appealing to an inflexible God, Goeritz's rejected superficiality, vanity, and commercialism in the art world. These important documents reflect the importance of faith and hope in art. Their contributions to this dissertation are compelling because it proves that his Christian philosophy was one that did not change. Indeed, he first wrote about spiritualism at length in 1953 with his *Manifesto de Arquitectura Emocional,* and continued with it until the end of his life.

Goeritz had a position, reinforced repeatedly through his writings, that he was convinced about the philosophic and social basis of art. Nearly every important

development in his practice began with the proclamation of these convictions in the form of a program or manifesto. Taken together, the manifestos constitute a personal history of his aesthetic and beliefs since the dramatic effectiveness of the manifesto form is heightened by brevity and conciseness. By synthesizing his ideas and put them in a writing form he could articulate clearly the basis of his work. Goeritz simultaneously fought the rise of what he called ‘‘confused and superfluous art,’’ and offered his diagnosis of the extreme functionalism that dominated architecture at mid-twentieth century. His position was aimed at finding a middle ground between the two: a form of art that escaped overpowering functionalism without resorting to the superfluous. Goeritz advocated a return to spirituality through creative action itself and through the emotion that art and architecture should create in the public. Goeritz encouraged a coming back to art as collective service to a "socialization of art." By socialization he meant not a soviet communist one but a return to art as service and not as a commodity.[383]

PLEASE STOP!

In March 18, 1960, Goeritz entered the polemics of the New York art world by performing a one-man protest at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City. Goeritz was protesting the presentation of Swiss-born artist Jean Tinguely's work called a "self-constructing and self-destroying work of art," at MoMA.[384] According to Carla Stellweg, "this was the first time that a Latin American artist confronted the avant-garde of New

[383] Mathias Goeritz. "Advertencia con indiscutibles fondos filosóficos," in *Arquitectura/México* núm. 82 (junio, 1963):120-126.

[384] *Homage to New York*, 1960.

York." [385] Outside of the museum, Goeritz distributed a manifesto entitled *PLEASE STOP!* [386]

> Please stop this aesthetic joke that is supposed to be profound! Stop boring us with yet another example of egocentric folk art! This is nothing but vanity. Today it is Jean Tinguely who wants to make us believe that his HOMAGE TO NEW YORK is leading us to a "wonderful and absolute reality." However, we discover that nothing has happened since the decisive moments of Dada. It is still the same miserable, neurotic reality, which fortunately never became absolute. It is not true that what we need is to "accept instability." That is again the easy way. We need STATIC VALUES! Of course, it is difficult to believe, since GOD was declared dead. It became easier to live without GOD, without cathedrals, without love. Nonconformist is easier to face than the Bible; functional vulgarity easier than cathedrals; sex easier than love. And as the easy way became fashionable – our whole modern art is in a sad situation. It is a fact that man is not made only to rationalize. Man is also made to believe. When man believes, he becomes able to do more important work. We need faith! We need love! We need GOD! GOD means life! We need the very definite laws and commandments of GOD! We need cathedrals and pyramids! We need a greater, a meaningful art! We do not need another easy self-destruction. Be consequent! Honor the tradition of Hugo Ball! Go forward and make the decisive, the most difficult step of Huelsenbeck's NEW MAN: From Dada to Faith![387]

Goeritz was against work of artists like Tinguely, who he considered were making art as entertainment or circus like. His cry can be understood as a man conflicted

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[385] Carla Stellweg, "Magnet-New York: Conceptual, Performance, Environmental, and Installation Art by Latin American Artists in New York," in *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970*, ed. Luis Cancel (New York: The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1989), 287.

[386] Olivia Zúñiga, *Mathias Goeritz*, (Ciudad de México: Ediciones Intercontinental, 1963), 42. This is the first of three manifestos that Goeritz wrote in 1960 and that corresponded with individual shows in the three respective cities: New York, Paris and México City.

[387] Mathias Goeritz, *Please Stop!* Manifesto written in English and Manifiesto "*L'art priere contre l'art-merde"* (El arte plegaria contra el arte mierda) París, May 1960, CENIDIAP-INBA Archive. Fondo Mathias Goeritz.

with faith and in need of constant reconfirmation of Christian values. His traumatic experiences of World War II left him a void and a mark that he was not able to shake up in coming years. Goeritz admired one of Dada founders Richard Huelsenbeck who writes, "The dadaists were different, and so were the first abstract artists. They were imbued with the same moral fervor, humanitarian concern, and awareness of social disintegration and the threat to the self it brought with it. While society seemed beyond the pale -- while they felt helpless to do anything about its disintegration -- they did feel that art could save the individual from it."[388] The nightmare effect of World War II in Goeritz propelled him to believe in the power of art, after all artworks are symbols of hope.

Jean Tinguely's work: a twenty-three-foot-long, twenty-seven-foot-high, machine was set in motion before an audience at the sculpture garden of MoMA in New York City. The machine was designed to explode in 24 hours after the presentation, instead, it self-destroyed almost immediately and had to be extinguished by the fire department. Goeritz commented on the work in his protest/performance at MoMA[389] and in documents such as his manifesto *Estoy Harto* (I've had it). What are the roots, one might inquire, of this intolerant attitude by Goeritz and what is the meaning of his mystical position? For him, as he wrote, art was a prayer, something that seemed outrageously outdated in the prosperous times after the war. For a great part of the population, these were affluent and

[388] Richard Huelsenbeck, *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer* (New York: Viking, 1974), 160

[389] *Please, Stop!* Manifest at MoMA, New York, 1960.

optimistic years. However, this backward position opens to question his motives. It is not possible that a man as experimental as Goeritz take this traditional position. His manifesto writings of this period and subsequent performance appear strategic. The mention of Huelsenbeck, at the end of the manifesto, is important. Goeritz is referring to Richard Huelsenbeck (1892-1974), one of the founders of the Dada movement, along with Hugo Ball and others, in Zurich and Berlin. Huelsenbeck left Berlin in 1936 and relocated to New York City. Goeritz's protest is not just against what he considered superfluous artistic interventions, like Tinguely's, but a way for him to get the attention of Tinguely influential French art circle. Amongst others, Dada big guru Huelsenbeck, who Goeritz admired very much, and Tinguely Paris gallerist Iris Clert. A few weeks after the MoMA protest, Clert offered Goeritz a show at her Paris gallery.

In his book *Memoirs of a Dada drummer*, Huelsenbeck writes, "Goeritz was opposed to motion as the basic principle of life… his pamphlet referred to one of my early Dada manifestos *The New Man*. We discussed the matter and I felt almost like the founder of a religion, who receives the leaders of various sects. Permanence, said Goeritz, is the irrational, whereas shortly before Tinguely had assured me that only motion can be identified with the irrational."[390] Both, Tinguely and Goeritz shared the concept of irrationality as an important artistic element. Intellectuals from the Frankfurt School, like Adorno, believed that Western

[390] Richard Huelsenbeck, *Memoirs of a Dada drummer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 133.

Enlightenment did not represent the liberation of the human mind from superstition thinking. The horrors of the 20th Century have corroborated the conversion of old myths into a new one called rationality.[391] Goeritz's irrationality comes from existentialism and the viewpoint of trying to make sense out of an incoherent world. After all, humanity in the allegedly enlightened 20th century, had succumbed to barbarity. He chose his own alternative to reason, in different periods of his life, leap of faith acts, exemplified with the construction of *el eco*; and heroic revolt, like his protest at MoMA against Tinguely's work. Tinguely placed special importance on the freedom that belonged to the ephemeral aspect of his work, a very different take than Goeritz's who promulgated for permanence and persistence. Permanence was a very important concept to Goeritz. He envisioned his monumental abstract sculptures as permanent fixtures, using concrete for his construction. It's ironic to think that graffiti art, that is ephemeral, has taken central stage, on and off, on the permanent concrete urban sculptures of Goeritz's.

Huelsenbeck acknowledged that Goeritz was "one of the very few who has understood the tension between the eternal and the rapid changes of things and people. … Everything is of course not movement, as I would like to say in contrast to Tinguely, although the importance of movement needs to be understood."[392] Truer in many ways to the energy of the original Dada, Goeritz proclaimed, "STOP

[391] Stuart Walton, "Theory from the ruins," *Aeon* (May, 2017).

[392] Charles Hulbeck (Richard Huelsenbeck) to Goeritz, 10 October 1960. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas (translation from German to English by Astrid Radtke).

the aesthetic, so-called 'profound' jokes! STOP boring us with another sample of ego-centric folk art!" His protest echoed that of the British art critic and author David Sylvester. The critic was unimpressed by the self-destruction of Jean Tinguely's machine-piece. According to the eye-witness account of writer Calvin Tomkins, Sylvester left the event early accompanied by "two noted Abstract Expressionist painters, and mumbling about his dislike of 'tuxedo dada.'"[393] However, Goeritz captured the attention of sculptor and architect Frederick Kiesler, who invited him to present his ideas to the Artists' Club in New York. Gathered among others were Mark Rothko, Franz Kline, Al Kotin, and Ad Reinhardt. These artists, except Rothko, were acquaintances of Goeritz and part of his mail correspondence group.[394]

L'ART PRIERE CONTRE L'ART MERDE

In May of the same year and during an individual exhibition in Paris at the Iris Clert Gallery, the vanguard international gallery of artists such as Yves Klein, Goeritz published another manifesto, *L'Art Priere contre L'Art Merde* (prayer art against shit art). Goeritz protested, literally, against "art shit," which he argued was an art that is interested in deceiving and that is only for the fashion of the moment and the vanity of the artist, among other things. His manifesto was a premonition of things to come. The following

[393] Calvin Tomkins, "Beyond the Machine," *The New Yorker* (February 10, 1962).

[394] "The Club," founded in 1949, was located at 39 East 8th Street. The members were mostly war veterans, and professional artists. Marika Herskovic, *New York School Abstract Expressionists: Artists Choice by Artists* (New York: New York School Press, 2000), 11-12

year Italian artist Piero Manzoni started selling his "shit" in cans with the price determined by the gram cost of gold.

> Understand, finally, that this is a struggle between ART-PRAY and art-shit. Realize that: art-shit, is anything; the art in fashion at the moment, the impotent vexing eroticism, the scandalous propaganda of materialistic surrealism, the conscious or subconscious egotism, the gratuitous expressionism—figurative or abstract—the jest called profound, the sophisticated 'spirit' and the logic, the vulgar functional art, the pretension of rationalism, the mechanical or individual self-destruction, the conquered moon, the decorative calculation, all the amusing and chaotic pornography of 'individualism,' the glorification of the ego, the cruelty, the vanity and the ambition, the violence, and the bluff and the 'merde' itself.[395]

Regarding the line "the mechanical or individual self-destruction," Goeritz foresaw that if the artist could destroy his creation in the name of art, as Tinguely did with his *Homage to New York,* the moment would come when the artist would partially or totally hurt himself physically. Goeritz articulated the practice of the Viennese Actionists of mid 1960s and of body art in the nineteen seventies. Artists such as Hermann Nitsch and Gunther Brus used their own bodies in a destructive and violent way. Therefore, Goeritz promulgated permanence in art because "shit" is not permanent and ephemeral.

Goeritz spoke against *L'art merde* and in favor of what he called *L'art priere,* an idealistic, mystical art. Goeritz proposes a way to find faith in art and transform it into a prayer:

> Prayer art is totally different than *L'art merde,* is the pyramid, the cathedral, the ideal, mystic or human love, abundance in the heart,

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[395] Manifiesto *"L'art priere contre l'art-merde"* (El arte plegaria contra el arte mierda), París, May 1960. CENIDIAP-INBA Archive. Fondo Mathias Goeritz.

> the fight against egocentrism and pro God, Dada rebellion against incredulity, the never reached sun, the crucifixion of vanity and ambition, form and color as adoration expression, the monochromatic expressing the metaphysic, the emotional experience, the line that with its simplicity creates a spiritual world, the irrational and absurd beauty of a Gregorian chant, service and absolute dedication: This is Art, This is Prayer.
> Since years ago, we are pursued with artifice of art-shit found in official and private galleries, in elegant houses and in museums.
> Please, STOP![396]

Goeritz shout out was against commercialism in art. Because of his neo-Dadaist position, Goeritz was alienated from the international artistic community. For example, the French artist Arman attacked him through his *Full Up* installation in Paris (1960), when he deposited one thousand copies of Goeritz's 1960 manifesto, *L'art priere contre l'art-merde* (prayer art against shit art), among the trash that filled the Iris Clert Gallery.[397] Arman's act responded directly to Goeritz's own critique of contemporary artistic practices and, specifically, of the work of Arman's fellow *Nouveaux Réalistes* artists, Yves Klein, and Jean Tinguely. For Goeritz, this attack had to have felt like a disappointment on his part. For the first time, one of the most important European contemporary groups ostracized him. Nonetheless, he continued fostering relations with avant-garde groups in Germany, England, and most importantly New York City. In Germany was the Zero group and in England Ian Hamilton, among others; Goeritz had a rich mail correspondence with both and published their work in *Arquitectura/México*.

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396 Ibid.

397 "Arman's List of Objects Accumulated in the Galerie Iris Clert for the Exhibition 'Le Plein' (I960)," in *Arman 1955-1991: A Retrospective* (Houston: The Museum of Fine Arts, 1991), 2.

According to his calendar book, New York had the record of most visited city.[398] He established long time correspondence with Abstract Expressionist artists like Al Kotin, Franz Kline, and Ad Reinhardt. As Andrea Giunta has written, letters were "a way to nurture the uncontainable need to promote initiatives that linked him with those who were thinking of and working on comparable projects in other places, despite the distances that separated them."[399] Goeritz also fostered these relations with frequent trips to New York City.

ESTOY HARTO AND ESTAMOS HARTOS

Upon his return to México, Goeritz felt the need to outline his posture in another Manifesto *Estoy Harto,* made public in the 1960 exhibition at the Antonio Souza Gallery. A year later, he repeated the previous manifesto, writing in plural: *Estamos Hartos*. Thus, his individual protest turned into the movement of *Los Hartos*. In the manifesto *Los Hartos*, Goeritz commented: "Art must once again become SERVICE. The artist must no longer consider himself different, better or more important than any other person, but turn toward spiritual humility. Each one must show the best of which he can produce and giving, that of which he is most convinced. Art as prayer, this is the motto of *Los Hartos*." By spiritual humility Goeritz advocated Middle- Ages values where a collective benefit plays an important role. Three other artists joined in: José Luis Cuevas, Pedro

[398] Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

[399] Andrea Giunta, "Proyectos fundadores. Mathias Goeritz y Jorge Romero Brest en la escena artística de posguerra," in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Ensayos y testimonios,* eds. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini and Ferruccio Asta (Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1997), 195.

Friedeberg, and Jesús Reyes Ferreira, as well as people associated with other practices. According to Lily Kassner, *"Los Hartos* was the first Conceptual exhibition presented in México."[400] The manifesto included the following text,

> We are fed up with the pretentious imposition of logic and of reason, of functionalism, of decorative calculus, and of the chaotic pornography of individualism, of the glory of the day, of the fashion of the moment, of vanity and of ambition, of bluff and of the artistic joke, of conscious and subconscious egocentrism, of fatuous concepts, of the exceedingly tedious propaganda of the isms and the ists, figurative or abstract. Fed up also with the preciosity of an inverted aesthetic; fed up with the copy or stylization of a heroically vulgar reality. Fed up, above all, with the artificial and hysterical atmosphere of the so-called art world, with its adulterated pleasures, its gaudy salons and its terrifying vacuum. We recognize the necessity of abandoning the illusory dreams of the glorification of the ego and of deflating art. We recognize that human work, now, is most vigorous where the so-called artist less intervenes. We recognize, more and more, the importance of the service, or of any abnegated act based on a natural ethic, all logic aside –the cultivation of an orchard, the fulfilling of a professional duty, or the education of a child.
> We try to begin anew from below in a spiritual-sociological sense. All established values will have to be rectified: Believe without asking in what! Make, or at least try to make man's work become a PRAYER.[401]

Goeritz continued reiterating the need for a higher art, meaning an art that can communicate emotions and have a connection between artist work and everyday social life. Holding out to his ideals from his closest artistic sources: from Kandinsky spiritualism concepts, to the Dada of Hugo Ball and Richard Huelsenbeck, younger artists

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[400] Lily Kassner, *Mathias Goeritz: Una Biografía 1915-1990* (Ciudad de México: UNAM, 1998, 2007), 194.

[401] Mathias Goeritz, *Estamos Hartos*, 1961, in Leonor Cuahonte (compiladora), *El Eco de Mathias Goeritz: Pensamientos y dudas autocriticas* (Ciudad de México: Turner, 2015), 38.

than Goeritz, like Tinguely, thought differently about art. By 1960 there was no longer a moral revolution, but an artistic maneuver. It was artistic fight, rather than combat with society, like the one instigated at *Café Voltaire*.[402] It retained a certain emotional vigor, but lost its moral rigor, and Goeritz rebelled against that.

Together with the manifesto, the participant artists and staff of the gallery gave out other leaflets. One, for example, stated:

> The fed-ups reject any association with any artistic group, including, of course, the neo-dadaists who ignore that DADA is eternal. The fed-ups are also fed up with DADA. Its realism is of a MORAL nature. The fact that the fed-ups are exhibiting their work at the Antonio Souza Gallery does not imply identification on any of the parts. It is purely coincidental. If by any reason this exhibition would offend the sensibility of the people related to the arts, the fed ups would like to categorically declare that their intention has never been that of hurting anybody. Their intentions are good. They are just fed up.[403]

The group exhibit consisted of twelve exhibiting artists, but the work of two of them stood out. The Hungarian-Mexican photographer Katy Horna presented one of the most striking works of the exhibit, an image of one of the patients in the mental institution La Castañeda asylum. The title of the 1944 photo is "El Iluminado," which translates as "illuminated," "enlightened," or "visionary." The photography subject and title of the work encapsulated the mood of the exhibit, as if the subject has answers to all the *Fed-Up* artists concerns. Artist Pedro Friedeberg presented a couple of tables with legs that seem

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[402] Café Voltaire, Zurich, was the reunion place of the Dada group. This is where they used to perform and where the artistic group was born.

[403] Pamphlet at Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

to be running away from functionalist architecture.[404] The article by art critic Margarita Nelken, named the show an occurrence destined to get attention and with an agenda for creating a scandal.[405] Goeritz's Dadaist sarcasm caused rejection and the exhibit actions were valued as ridicule.

Another flier read, "If you are equally fed up with the fastidious uproar of the so-called artists, we beg you to fill up this application, with which you will obtain the right of calling yourself an HARTIST. At the end of the paper a request form: "I state that I am fed up. Therefore, I respectfully request to be considered a FED-UP." (Name, surname, profession, address, date and signature). Goeritz distributed these fliers to his mail contacts and was taken by surprise when the likes of artistic personalities such as Picasso and Duchamp sent him telegrams (Figure 29) and (Figure 30), acknowledging that they were also *hartos*.[406] Years later, distinguished American art historian and author, Barbara Rose wrote to Goeritz in 1967, "I have my "*Estamos Hartos*" label above my desk, and it just about expresses my feeling. Writing about art is conceivably the most demoralizing occupation outside of making it that I can think of."[407] This letter proves that Goeritz *Estamos Hartos* project was something dear to him since he talked to Rose about it, six

[404] Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, "Los hartos," *México en la Cultura*, suplemento de *Novedades*, 10 de diciembre de 1961.

[405] Margarita Nelken. "La vacilada como punto final," *Excélsior*, 10 de diciembre de 1961.

[406] Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

[407] Letter to Goeritz from Barbara Rose, dated December 3, 1967 at Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

years after the exhibition. The resonance of this letter is a testament to the impact of the project. This artistic project could not have happened but in a big metropolis.

México City offers the environment of a large metropolis. By this I mean, the character of a large cosmopolitan city where artists like Goeritz can mount a show like the above described, and there is an audience attending and critics writing about it. For artists working in a big city there is a nothing-to-lose-attitude and a freedom to create and experiment. Experimentation was one of Goeritz's practice tenets, and he taught experimental practices on his visual art courses in Guadalajara and México City. Metropolis, and México City is a good example of one, in the context of modernism, offers the direct effect of immigration on émigré and exiled artists. Affirming the fact that major innovators in art have been immigrants and, according to Raymond Williams, "…liberated from their national cultures, placed in quite new relations… the artists and writers of this phase found the only community available to them: a community of the medium, of their own practices."[408] We can conclude that based on Goeritz's émigré status, nationalism in art is not relevant to him, and his artistic practice was that of an international artist. Goeritz always had a global view regarding his works and publications. Constantly legitimizing his work by the opinion of a transnational art critic and with his international participation in art exhibits and biennials.

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[408] Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the new Conformists* (New York, Verso, 1989, 2007), 45.

RUTA DE LA AMISTAD: THE ROUTE OF FRIENDSHIP

Throughout history, international exhibitions are conscious representations and cultural constructions of progress, nationalism, and modernity; the Summer Olympic Games in México were not exception. *La Ruta de la Amistad* (Route of Friendship), was devised as a cultural counterpart of the Mexican Olympics Games in 1968. This project, led by Goeritz, highlights his talents as a cultural agent able to orchestrate international collaborations that helped position México at the center of world politics. The abstract compositions of the nineteen sculptures commissioned for this event reflect the ascendancy of non-figurative art and the displacement of the Mexican School.

Ten years after the inauguration of *Torres*, Goeritz unveiled his monumental sculptural project *The Route of Friendship*. As stated by Eric Zolof, "A tourist arriving in México City in the early summer of 1968 would have found the capital awash in color, an air of expectation and optimism everywhere palpable as the country finalized last-minute preparations for the Olympic Games, scheduled to commence that October."[409] Along a designated *Route of Friendship* that extended across the southern part of the city, monumental abstract sculptures of brightly, painted concrete by artists of international renown could be observed in various stages of completion. The *Route* was even more remarkable at night. Each sculpture was illuminated from the ground up. The Anillo Periférico, inaugurated in 1964, was the beltway marking México City's southern city

[409] Eric Zolov, "Land of Tomorrow: México and the 1968 Olympics," in *The Americas*, vol. 61, no. 2 (Oct. 2004):159-188.

limits, and provided the setting for México 68's most significant works of permanent, public art: *The Route of Friendship* (Figure 31).

México City won the contest to host the XIX Olympic Games that took place in October of 1968. The Olympic Games in México City were hosted, for the first time, by a developing country and in a Spanish-speaking one. More importantly, they were also the first modern games to hold a Cultural Olympiad at the same time. During the Ancient Olympic Games, there was an important cultural element present; the Greeks believed in the idea of celebrating mind and body. That tradition was interrupted when the Olympic Committee started the Modern Olympic Games in 1894. México brought back that tradition with the 1968 Olympiad. The twenty sport events on the agenda for the Olympiad were matched by twenty cultural events.

There had been much international controversy regarding the feasibility that México was going to be able to succeed in staging the Olympic Games. On July 16 1966, President Diaz Ordaz announced the appointment of architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, at the time Vice President in charge of construction within the Mexican Olympic Committee, to head the Organizing Committee. Ramírez Vázquez was not a sports enthusiast, nor did he have any direct links to the International Olympic movement. Yet, as Ariel Rodríguez Kuri writes, he was a "man of the system" whose insider-outsider status (he was arguably the nation's most prominent architect, and had just finished the construction of the anthropology museum) was precisely what Díaz Ordaz believed

necessary to shake up the Organizing Committee.[410] After all, Díaz Ordaz, who was a fiscal conservative politician, felt that by placing Ramírez Vázquez on the helm he was going to be able to control spending and efficiently run the games.[411]

Under the direction of Ramírez Vázquez, a plan was developed to determine the country and city resources and more importantly its limitations. The requirements of the Olympics, writes Rodríguez Kuri, were "adapted to the city and not the other way around."[412] In the end, the country's $176 million investment amounted to a fraction of the amount expended by Japan on the 1964 Games. Still, it was hardly an insignificant sum for a nation with pressing rural and urban development needs.

In 1966, Goeritz proposed to the head of the Mexican Olympic Games the creation of a series of cultural events. As one of the events of the Cultural Olympic Games, Goeritz proposed a sort of Olympiad of Sculptors. This idea considered the fact that in ancient times the Olympics were not limited to physical contests but also included a cultural program in which sculpture played an important part. As part of the program of the cultural Olympiad, there were six events dedicated to the visual arts. The most ambitious artistic plan of the cultural Olympiad was the creation of a Symposium of

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[410] Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, "Hacia México 68: Pedro Ramírez Vázquez y el proyecto olímpico," *Secuencia* 56 (mayo-agosto 2003), 47. Ramírez Vazquez was an architect of considerable national and international renown. His resume included the winning design for low-cost rural school buildings and numerous government commissioned projects, including the building that housed the Secretary of Labor and the acclaimed Museum of Anthropology and History.

[411] Winning the bid had been the obsession of former President Adolfo López Mateos (1958-64), a populist in economic and political matters and an avid athlete.

[412] Rodríguez Kuri, "Hacia México 68," … 39.

Contemporary Sculptors in México.[413] The International Sculptors Meeting took place in June of 1967. Numerous meetings devoted exclusively to aesthetic questions took place in the past, but the idea was that this one should give the artists a specific task or theme. The specific task included three aspects that served as requirements for each sculpture:

1) Abstract in design
2) Monumental in scale
3) The use of concrete as the main material

Goeritz chose reinforced concrete for the sculptures of the *Route*. Cement, and especially reinforced concrete, flourished in the 1920s. After nearly a decade of civil war, cement quickly emerged as the government's preferred building material for its projects, including schools, office, buildings, factories, markets and stadiums (Figure 32). Goeritz's ideas about monumental urban sculpture were about merging with nature; he did not need background for his sculpture. He wanted his sculptures to be the background. Goeritz did not want to interfere with the landscape, but wanted to enhance what was already there. Goeritz had serious concerns about the explosive growth of his adopted city. He articulated his thoughts and vision in the following text given at the inaugural of the symposium of international sculptors:

> Modern man's environment is becoming increasingly chaotic. The growth of population, the socialization of life and the advance of technology have created an atmosphere of confusion. The ugliness of many indispensable elements and of advertising, in general, disfigures urban communities, particularly in the suburbs and on the highways; the latter, in this century of accelerated tempo and the

[413] Karen Wendl, "The Route of Friendship: A Cultural/Artistic Event of the Games of the XIX Olympiad in México City – 1968," *OLYMPIKA: The International Journal of Olympic Studies*, Volume VII (1998): 124.

> automobile, have acquired an unprecedented significance. Consequently, there is an urgent need for artistic design focused on contemporary town and thoroughfare planning. The artist, instead of being invited to collaborate with urban planners, architects and engineers, stands apart and produces only for the minority that visits art galleries and museums. An art integrated from the very inception of the urban plan is of fundamental importance in our age. This means that artistic work will leave its surroundings of art for art's sake and establish contact with the masses by means of total planning.[414]

Goeritz had full responsibility for the direction of the overall project, including the selection of a site for each sculpture. However, he had to justify his ideas and their realization to the Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Olympiad. He was after all the only person who had an articulated vision of the project. Goeritz was not afraid of breaking the boundaries between sculpture and architecture because they were conceived from the point of view of a driving viewer. The experience of the creation of *Torres de Ciudad Satélite,* discussed in chapter IV, gave him very valuable knowledge. He also understood sculpture as an intervention among the constructed environment. It was not a question of being unassuming but of joining his creativity to that of the environment on its own terms, much as light, color, shadows, mist and rainbows do, in their own time and in their own way, affecting the onlooker, altering perceptions, transforming surfaces and causing variations of depth, illusion and heightened perspective. As mentioned before, Goeritz wrote in articles his conception of monumental sculptures as visual prayers and as contemporary cathedral's.

[414] Mathias Goeritz, "The Route of Friendship: Sculpture," *Leonardo,* Vol. 3, No. 4 (Oct. 1970): 397-407.

The nineteen monumental sculptures were placed along the newly constructed freeway, called *Anillo Periferico* in México City. The *Periferico* runs between the City center and the southern outskirts where the Olympic Village was located for the XIX Olympiad. The selection of the artists was supposed to gather sculptors from every continent and from all ethnic groups. The selection had an idealistic and humanistic nature that transcended aesthetics and was in conformity with the fundamental principles of the Olympic Movement. It was to be an international event with the unifying theme of goodwill of all the peoples of the world. The problem the sculptors were to solve limited their artistic liberty with the following restrictions: the sculptures had to be made of concrete, be monumental, and abstract. Furthermore, the sculptors were supposed to have in mind solutions related to being located adjacent to a superhighway.

The sculptural works were designed for permanent location along the twelve miles of the Olympic Freeway, an extension of the new periphery that encircled México City. The idea of relating sculpture to a road or an avenue is an old one, with the difference being that in the 1930s, the car had supplanted the horse. Goeritz's decision to locate the sculptures along a freeway was perhaps due to his previous experience while building *Torres de Ciudad Satélite*. *The Torres*, as discussed in chapter IV, is a group of monumental sculpture consisting of five concrete towers of unequal height in the center of a traffic circle. This project allowed him to discover another viewer, which is the driving viewer. Additionally, in 1966, in a book titled *The View from the Road*, author Donald Appleyard published his results of several photographic experiments done while driving a car and photographing different sights. The results interested Goeritz

tremendously and he used them to develop his own visual theory and with that the creation of a new art language.[415]

Once finished, the *Route of Friendship* constituted the longest corridor of sculpture in the world. Seventeen kilometers in length, these sculptures were of different heights ranging from almost eight meters to twenty-two meters. They are placed with a distance from each other of about a kilometer and a half each. To put this project into perspective, we should remember that the last major public international sculpture competition happened in England in 1952-3 with the controversial *Monument to the Unknown Political Prisoner* project. According to Andrew Causey, "until 1959 figuration of one sort or another was the dominant mode, at least in sculpture and among younger artists with post-war reputations."[416] Goeritz effectively created the first monumental urban abstract sculpture corridor in the world.

The scope of this dissertation does not allow for a presentation of a time line of the condition of the sculptures throughout these years. It is worth noting that the sculptures have gone from a great presence in 1968 through roughly the late 1970s to a state of abandonment and then restoration on and off for the last twenty years.

Invited Sculptors and their Sculptures, in order of appearance along the route:

Artist	Country	Title
Ángela Gurría (b. 1929)	México	*Señales*

[415] Donald Appleyard, *The View from the Road* (Boston: MIT Press, 1966). While doing research at the artist's archives in México City I saw Goeritz's own annotations to the book mentioned above.

[416] Andrew Causey, *Sculpture since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 20.

Willi Gutmann (b. 1927)	Switzerland	*El Ancla*
Milos Chlupác (b. 1920)	Czechoslovakia	*Las Tres Gracias*
Koshi Takahashi (1925-1996)	Japan	*Esferas*
Pierre Székely (1923-1901)	France / Hungary	*El Sol Bípedo*
Gonzalo Fonseca (1922-1997)	Uruguay	*Torre de los Vientos*
Constantino Nivola (1911-1988)	Italy / United Status	*Sin Titulo*
Jacques Moeschal (1913-2005)	Belgium	*Sin Titulo*
Todd Williams (b. 1939)	United States	*Sin Titulo*
Grzegorz Kowalski (b. 1942)	Poland	*Reloj Solar*
Jose Maria Subirachs (b. 1927-2014)	Spain	México
Clement Meadmore (1929-2005)	Australia	*Sin Titulo*
Herbert Bayer (1900-1985)	United States / Austria	*Muro Articulado*
Joop J. Beljon (1922-2002)	The Netherlands	*Tertulia de Gigantes*

Itzhak Danziger (1916-1977)	Israel	*Puerta de Paz*
Olivier Séguin (b. 1927)	France	*Sin Titulo*
Mohamed Melehi (b. 1936)	Morocco	*Sin Titulo*
Jorge Dubón (1936-2005)	México	*Sin Titulo*
Helen Escobedo (1934-2010)	México	*Puerta al Viento*

Artists of the *Route of Friendship*

Aside from these artists, whose sculptures were present on the *Route of Friendship*, the Cultural Olympic team had other three artists as honored guests. Alexander Calder (1898-1976) whose monumental steel sculpture *Sol Rojo (Red Sun)* is located on the grounds of the *Azteca Stadium*.[417] German Cueto (1893-1975) who created an eight-meter height bronze sculpture titled *Hombre Corriendo (Running Man).*The abstract sculpture has a prime visible location because is at the main avenue which takes you to the National University (UNAM) campus, right across the street from the Olympic Stadium.[418] The third artist was Mathias Goeritz who contributed a group of seven monumental columns as a sculptural constellation titled *La Osa Mayor* (*The Big Dipper*) placed on the grounds of the Sports Palace (Figure 33).[419] Calder's and Goeritz's

[417] Estadio Azteca.

[418] The only bronze sculpture of the whole project, all the other ones done in concrete. There is also the sculpture created by Alexander Calder in steel.

[419] The sculptures varied in height with the tallest measuring 50 feet high.

sculptures became the iconic representation of their respective sports facilities and their images broadcast to the millions of viewers all over the world.

The *Ruta de la Amistad* sculptures express a 1960s view of modernism, such as Mexican sculptor Ángela Gurría's *Signs*, a pair of inverted apostrophes piercing the sky (Figure 34). Czech sculptor Miloslav Chlupac's *The Three Graces*, resembling pink and purple bamboo shoots. *Spheres*, stark white Pac Man shapes by Japanese sculptor Kioshi Takahashi; and the Italian sculptor Costantino Nivola's set of angular white blocks striped in red and green, called *Man of Peace*. Spanish sculptor José María Subirachs' *México* consists of black and white geometric shapes that recall Aztec archaeological sites. Despite their size, the only *Ruta de la Amistad* sculpture with a functional interior is Uruguayan sculptor Gonzalo Fonseca's *Tower of the Winds*, which looks a bit like a circular adobe fortress from the outside. Its light-filled interior hosts rotating art installations. This work was more of a building than a sculpture. Designed for visiting rather than just viewing, it constitutes a very early example of sculpture that is to be experienced and not just seen as an object. Near each site, there was a place to park cars and a path to the sculpture so that interested drivers could leave their cars and view the sculptures at leisure. Unfortunately, this feature was lost years ago with the uncontrollable growth of the city.

From the utopian dream of the *Route of Friendship* collaboration, Goeritz contributions were questioned and he received much criticism. At the end of the project, only one artist from Africa (Morocco) was included out of the expected three; one from Japan who represented the entirely Asian continent and the heaviest weight of artists

came from Europe with ten represented artists. In retrospect, and in the words of Goeritz stated in an article written in 1970, he admitted that the project was too ambitious:

> The intention of giving the event a universal, humanistic quality and of gathering persons from all over the world made us face a series of extra artistic considerations that caused us many special problems. Due to a lack of adequate personal contacts in the international world, we sometimes had to seek recommendations and help from official institutions; however, we investigated each case before making an invitation. Nevertheless, some sculptors, whom I considered especially qualified, remained outside the program, while others were invited because they fulfilled certain prerequisites, which were not exclusively related to their work.[420]

With the advent of the automobile and more importantly the use of highways by the general population, Goeritz was one of the first to recognize the need to develop monumental Urban Art. Goeritz also acknowledged the absurdity in erecting sculptures alongside a highway, thus transforming it into an outdoor gallery. Goeritz blames his stubbornness in not wanting to give up the idea of a sculpture road and in retrospect thought that it was a mistake. His goal was to bring art to the streets. The sculptures were part of city life, and citizens enjoyed them for many years. Goeritz foresaw that in the future, a big part of the population would be transported in cars and the sculptures worked very well when there were not so many buildings and bridges. However, with the explosive growth of the city and the proliferation of high rises, the monumentality of the sculptures lost their impact and character. Several second-floor highways hide the sculptures and impede looking at them without getting into a car accident.

[420] Mathias Goeritz, "The Route of Friendship: Sculpture," *Leonardo*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Oct. 1970): 403.

There were several accomplishments of the project. Goeritz achieved the inclusion of the work of two Mexican women artists, not a small feat for monumental sculpture at a time when most sculptors were men. *The Route of Friendship* is one of the first major cultural and artistic contemporary encounters between Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia and the USA that resulted in the creation of a permanent sculpture installation. With all its shortcomings, the project was a success and that is due in big part to the figure of Mathias Goeritz. He had well-established artistic networks across Latin America, Europe, and the USA. Due in part to all his travels, international projects, collaborating with different magazines, and knowledge of several languages, Goeritz possessed invaluable resources needed to bring internationally renowned sculptors to the Symposium and then to the final selection of sculptors.

The *Patronato Ruta de la Amistad*, a local conservation organization, began working to restore and preserve the sculptures in 1994. They completed work on eighteen of them when the World Monuments Fund stepped in 2011. Construction of a new elevated second level on the Periferico Sur was beginning and according to Norma Baldacci, WMF's Director of Programs for Latin America, "The sculptures were not legally projected as landmarks, and engineers' maps did not include them. So, they planned the second-story supports without consideration of existing sculptures."[421] The threat of demolition forced the relocation of almost all the sculptures. Most were moved, and they are now grouped in two huge cloverleaf intersections making the restored

[421] Christine Delsol, "Ruta de la Amistad: A restoration 17 years in the making," *San Francisco Gate*, December 19, 2012.

sculptures visible again. Even though there are press articles that talked about the sculptures being accessible and in a park setting the true is the opposite. I physically drove and had a hard time finding them. Congregated and crowed in a cloverleaf intersection, their presence that I witness ten years ago is all gone. There is not parking, and the only choice is to see them by driving by, but since there are so many sculptures in each cloverleaf it's difficult to appreciate them. This is not how Goeritz envisioned the project.

INSTITUTIONAL AESTHETIC CHANGE

The Route of Friendship was part of a major shift in México's aesthetic focus and identity in the 1960s. If *Torres* was a privately commissioned work, the *Route* was organized by the State. The sculptures commissioned to celebrate world harmony during a time of expectation and optimism, when the country was undergoing a transformation from Third World to developing nation and becoming more involved in international trade and cultural exchange. We should not overlook the fact that the biggest aesthetic project of the Mexican Olympic Games was restricted to sculpted abstract forms as opposed to figurative painting. As discussed in many newspapers around the world, and specifically in the *New York Times*, "The Olympic Games in México City are not all about rowing and discus throwing. Culture as it did with the ancient Greeks, is getting equal time."[422] It is after all the first games where the closing ceremony transmitted in color to the entire world. As is the case in every major world event, the host country

[422] Grace Glueck, *The New York Times,* July 21, 1968.

wants to show their most creative, forward thinking face. We witness this strategy every four years with the country host of the Summer Olympic Games.

In the same way, that architecture took back elements of historical character and integrated in the creation of diverse urban projects, like at Escuela Normal by Mario Pani, the sculpture rescued the indigenous past and sought to integrate it into its plastic discourse. Raising it as a symbol of identity and linking it with the official discourse around art and its role as a means of social compound. This position manifested through the construction of various public monuments such as sculptures in parks, and recreation spaces, as in offices of various government agencies, as well as schools and hospitals. In México, at mid-twentieth century, public sculpture had in common the aim of expressing the idea of nationality and belonging to the Mexican culture. Similarly, to mural painting, or the Mexican School of muralism, public sculpture was about a Mexican narrative specially the triumphs of the Mexican revolution. A good example of this is the public sculptural work, at the main entrance of the building, of the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS). Designed by architect Carlos Obregón Santacilia in 1948, the building lobby has a large bas sculpture by artist and muralist Jorge González Camarena. The work titled "The Man" portrays the features of an Indian man, embracing four children, as if the sculpture represented the strong State looking after his children. On the other hand, Goeritz's conception of his work was about eliciting emotions. According to scholar James Oles, "*Torres* were Goeritz's most prominent example of Emotional Architecture, even if here the 'buildings' were pure sculptures (Goeritz later called them

"visual prayers")."[423] Indeed, in an article written by Goeritz titled *¿Arquitectura emocional?* He states, "even if for most people, *Torres* signifies a large backdrop for advertisement, for me, an absurd romantic in a faithless century, are a visual prayer."[424] By visual prayer, the artist referred to the emotional response triggered upon seeing them. Goeritz situated *Torres*, with a car viewer on mind. Their scale and forms dramatically shift as one drives by, activating, on the driver, an emotional reaction. *Torres de Ciudad Satélite*, constitutes a point of rupture regarding the notion of public art:

> More emphatically, it can be said that, the ***Torres*** symbolized the entrance into the scene of a new practice in the Mexican cultural panorama of the fifties. No doubt is a work of rupture that inaugurates a new public art based on the sculpture that, being monumental, is not commemorative and that moves away from the nationalist discourse, through the language that tends toward abstraction.[425]

The above quote is brilliantly written by Daniel Garza Usabiaga and proves my point of the aesthetic changes that Goeritz brought to the Mexican artistic field. In México, from the decade of the 1930s, sculpture acquired a marked political language, influenced mainly by the rescue of pre-Hispanic indigenous culture, as well as the strong influence that muralism exerted on the artistic and cultural scene of the country, setting the bases of what some authors call the Mexican School of Sculpture. Regarding the influence of pre-Hispanic elements on Goeritz as an artist, Antonio Luna Arroyo says, "It goes without

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[423] James Oles, *Art and Architecture in México* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013), 328.

[424] Mathias Goeritz, "¿Arquitectura emocional?," *Arquitectura,* ENA, núm. 8-9 (mayo-junio 1960): 17-22.

[425] Daniel Garza Usabiaga, "Las torres de satélite. Escultura moderna y símbolo de la modernidad," in *Las Torres de Ciudad Satélite* (México, DF: Arquine/INBA, 2014), 78.

saying; Goeritz is an outstanding sculptor within the modernism movement in the plastic arts which has slowly come into being in México. He has been inspired by the ancient art of México, but his fundamental sensibility coincides more with the modern movement."[426] Goeritz influenced by the monumentality of pre-Hispanic archeological sites like Teotihuacan and incorporated that magnitude on his *Torres* and on the *Route of Friendship* design and work.

Days before the inauguration of the summer Olympics in 1968, Mexican university students organized a public march demanding civil liberties and human rights from the Gustavo Díaz Ordaz regime. A series of clashes between students and the riot police precipitated the violence in the plaza of *Tlatelolco* where scores of civilian demonstrators were murdered, wounded, and imprisoned by the Mexican military. The government-led assault exposed the limits of Mexican Constitutional Democracy leading many to question the established parameters of official power and the State's lack of accountability for crimes committed against the general populace. When these events were taking place, Goeritz immersed in one of his largest projects: *The Route of Friendship*, while the renowned writer Jose Revueltas was busy organizing the university students.

[426] Antonio Luna Arroyo, *Panorama de la Escultura Mexicana Contemporánea* (México: INBA, 1964), 128.

JOSE REVUELTAS (1914-1976)

The massacre of the students at Tlatelolco reminded everyone of all the problems buried under a propaganda campaign that proclaimed only the advancements of the economy using modern architecture images. I find in the writing of Jose Revueltas and his 1969 short novel *El Apando*, a good example of the other México, the dark side of the country; the México that contradicts all the advertisement of economic success.[427] *El Apando* describes a dystopia and a heterotopic space. It is a dystopian space in the sense that the story tells us an imaginary place where everything is as bad as it possibly can be. In *El Apando,* Revueltas shares the terrified world of jail prisoners with their addictions, their constant humiliation at the hands of the prison guards, who proclaim their power every second of the day. This enacted critique can be considered a process of 'resignification.' In the words of Judith Butler, "acts repeat; but they can repeat differently."[428] Thus, violent acts can undermine organizing norms even as they 'cite' them, since "the task is not whether to repeat, but how to repeat or, indeed, to repeat and, through a radical proliferation of violence, to displace the very violent norms that enabled the repetition itself.'[429] This process of resignification can be applied to Goeritz's work. His *Torres* declared by him as "visual prayers" while fellow German émigré Max Cetto considered them Commerce Cathedrals.[430] Furthermore, the State appropriated them in

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[427] José Revueltas, *El Apando* (Ciudad de México: Ediciones Era, 1969).

[428] Quoted in James Loxley, *Performativity* (London: Routledge, 2006), 189.

[429] Ibid. 189.

[430] Max Cetto, *Modern Architecture in México* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1961), 31.

the modern 'rebranding' ad campaigns. There is a big contradiction between the celebration of the upcoming Olympic Games opening and the suffering due to the student's massacre. While the city was awash of color, with the talent of graphic designers Lance Wyman and Eduardo Terrazas, unbeknownst a different reality existed. The oppression perpetrated by the Mexican State against some of the organizers and intellectuals was brutal.

El Apando was written while Revueltas was in jail at Palacio de Lecumberri, accused of being the "intellectual author" of the Mexican student movement that culminated in the Tlatelolco massacre. Often imprisoned for his political activism, from the time he was a boy (age of 14–15 years) he was sent for the first time to the maximum-security jail of those days: the Islas Marias. He participated in the Railway Men's Movement in 1958, for which they imprisoned him again. Revueltas shares with the reader the tensions that the inmates suffered within the terrifying structure that is the panopticon, where everyone knows that they are watched. The jail, with its internal spatial arrangements that allows a constant threat of inspection gives life to every character. It is worth mentioning that French philosopher Michel Foucault writes about, these set of conditions, in a book first published in 1975.[431] The dystopian conditions and atmosphere of surveillance captures inmates in an overall field of visibility. The jail setting gives the reader an idea of the violence and degradation of the human. The importance of this work is that even though Revueltas is talking about life in a jail, it can

[431] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish.* First published in French, Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison, 1975.

easily apply to life in México City where the threat of being watched, or listened to in phone conversations, is always present. Nowadays, we live surrounded by cameras. They are present everywhere: from public buildings, to banks, schools, and stores and represent a prototype of twentieth first century 'surveillance society.' In this sense, Revueltas was ahead of his time in articulating this sense of dystopian condition.

With *El Apando*, Jose Revueltas exposed many cultural taboos, from discussion of sexuality to conditions of living monitored by the State. *El Apando* gives the reader an understanding of the force and power that characterize the social relations among speaking bodies. We can also read it through the theory of modern sexuality presented by Michel Foucault, a theory in which power itself delineated in a strikingly original way. For Foucault, force was certainly not a matter of law or government, its operations understood as the prohibition or containment of energies and possibilities arising from other sources, as a repressive State apparatus. Revueltas allegorically employs elements of sex, violence, and rape as metaphors for cathartic experience aimed at healing the pain of a violent culture. In contrast, Goeritz used other strategies of performance to intervene directly in everyday life, creating situations that confused a spectator's ability to define reality. The carnival spirit was attained in both instances. Revueltas' work represents a grotesque underworld carnival and Goeritz a heterotopia with hints of a utopian world where all artists collaborate and get along in the creation process. What we can state is that both spaces *El Apando* and *El eco,* discussed in chapter II, have an approximation to

what Foucault described as heterotopic space.[432] Foucault describes heterotopia as alternative, phantasmagorical, and ordinary space where humanity and timelessness intersect with normal and ideal constructs of chronology, identity, sexuality, and reality. Heterotopia is a collection of *other* space — including museums, military camps, colonies, libraries, and cemeteries. Heterotopia invites sets of questions about space and the social structures of power. Foucault describes heterotopias that allow escape from social norms and structures, but others that are, for example, prisons and military schools as highly controlled, regimented sites. The first type of heterotopia applied to the ambiance that Goeritz created at *El eco* and later at the *Estamos Hartos* exhibit. Goeritz went against the social norms of space and exhibitions. At *El eco* he exhibited his *Serpent* sculpture in the outdoors, not a normal placement at that time. His exhibit of *Estamos Hartos* was totally arbitrary on art placement and art selection. The second description of heterotopia belongs to the world described in *El Apando* where surveillance, control, oppression is the everyday experience.

The writings of José Revueltas contribute to elucidate the point of State appropriation. Revueltas went from sharing the optimism towards México's future during the Lázaro Cárdenas years (1934-1940) to an extremely critical position regarding the post-Revolutionary government ideologies and policies. His 1961 *Ensayo sobre un proletariado sin cabeza* [433] (Essay About a Headless Proletariat) is one of the first

[432] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias." Originally given as a lecture in 1967, and published by the French journal *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* in October 1984.

[433] José Revueltas, *Ensayo sobre un proletariado sin cabeza*: Obras completas, vol. 17 (México: Era, 1982).

political works in México that attempted to analyze the mechanisms through which the Mexican State legitimized itself based on an appropriation of all the symbols, myths, and ideas generated from the Revolution. The essay written in 1961, when the political party system, known as PRI, founded in 1929, was starting to show signs of decline. Revueltas's pioneering attempt of unveiling the contradictions inherent to the Revolutionary national project from its very beginning helps to explain both the Revolution's historical failure and some of today's national politics decisions. Revueltas writing influenced the 1968 Student Rebellion, as well as the armed movements that emerged in the 1970s. *The Torres* image was re-signified by a State hungry for Modern images to export. The biggest marketing campaigns for México City as a worthy place to host the Olympic games of 1968 started in 1961 and *The Torres* futuristic image represented a modern state. [434]

STATE APPROPRIATION OF *TORRES DE SATÉLITE*

An exploration is made of the disconnection between how Goeritz perceived *Torres de Satélite,* and how the work's image is appropriated by the State. When Goeritz designed the *Torres,* with the collaboration of Luis Barragán and painter Jesús Reyes Ferreira, México City had embarked on a very active, ambitious infrastructure development due to demographic explosion and new wealth creation that resulted after

[434] The winner city announced in October 1963 and for the first time a Spanish-speaking nation was the host to the Games as well as a "developing" nation.

Second World War.[435] México City went through a remarkable period of urban growth and a reconfiguration of the social space from the period after World War II to the early 70s. *Torres de Satélite* are part of this visual and spatial transformation of the capital. The new sculptures conformed to the style of "high modernism" and became key components of a broader strategy by the government to construct a new visual presentation of México in the public (and especially foreign) eye. Another prime example of these efforts was the construction of the *Torre Latinoamericana,* completed in 1956 after a decade of construction. The skyscraper, which closely resembled the structure of the Empire State Building in New York City, became the tallest building in Latin America and quickly emerged as an iconic emblem of México's modernization prowess. The transformation of México's architectural landscape would accelerate rapidly after 1959 with major new public works projects encompassing the realms of housing, transportation, and cultural institutions. In sum, by the mid-1960s, México had succeeded at "rebranding" itself as a dynamic regional actor and emergent model of economic and political development on the world stage.

The "rebranding" happened with what became known as "new" advertising, a clear break from the kind of selling techniques that had been around since the birth of modern consumer culture in the dawn of the nineteenth century. In the late 1940s, a new generation of advertising gurus emerged in Madison Avenue, New York City. With tenets of: "Make the picture bigger" and "Make this line shorter," advertising shook the

[435] According to the Mexican census, between the years of 1940 and 1960, the population in the country doubled from 20 to 40 million.

usual language. These were all rare commands at a time when copy ruled over visuals.[436] Furthermore, in 1964, *The First Things First* manifesto, published with a call to a more radical form of graphic design. [437] As in other industries, American adverting influenced the ads created in México and other places. Using the monumental *Torres* as backdrop with products ranging from Datsun cars to typewriters, the message was of modern goods. Because of *Torres* location, outside of downtown, and the fact that there is a square surrounding the sculptures, Goeritz's *Torres de Satélite* served as advertising backdrop, ultimately usurping the building of *Torre Latinoamericana*. The fact that *Torre Latinoamericana* was much too like the Empire State building and that *Torres* had a futuristic aesthetic played a big role in its favoring by advertising campaigns.

Much of this successful relationship with the world of advertising, mainly printing press and the emerging television, is due to the transnational context of that time. As Garza Usabiaga mentions,

> The modernity of *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* in relation to the media was not limited to advertising and the market. The *Torres* generated their own visual culture. Sometimes connections were made between the concept of satellite and the culture of outer space that was widely popular during that time. The year of construction of the *Torres*, coincided with the first successful launch of an artificial satellite, the Sputnik I developed by the Soviet Union.[438]

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[436] Lawrence R. Samuel, "Thinking Smaller: Bill Bernbach and the Creative Revolution in Advertising of the 1950s," *Advertising & Society Review*, vol. 13, Issue 3 (2012).

[437] Ken Garland wrote the manifesto and 22 prominent graphic designers signed it. Published in *The Guardian* newspaper in 1964.

[438] Daniel Garza Usabiaga, "Las torres de satélite: Escultura moderna y símbolo de la modernidad," in *Las torres de ciudad Satélite...,* 106-107

Internationally, the space race captured the imagination of the public through imported images on television, and the popularity of science fiction served to visualize the new housing development with the futuristic *Torres*. Nationally, the tremendous growth of color television propelled it as a new communication media. All these elements were combined in television advertising of the time, which in turn constituted an important impulse for the national artistic scope.

Goeritz downplayed their commercial character among his friends and colleagues abroad. As art historian Jennifer Josten states,

> He did so by mailing them sets of dramatic black-and-white photographs by Marianne Goeritz, his first wife, making no mention of the fact that the towers were painted. This omission suggests that, for Goeritz, their colorfulness was an inherently *local*, rather than an international value. By sending only Marianne's carefully cropped, nonobjective views that were taken soon after the towers were painted and before the *fraccionamiento* was further developed, Goeritz avoided communicating any allusions to the development's for-profit nature."[439]

These black and-white photographs, which conformed to the standards of international architecture journals, were how Goeritz, like Barragán and Pani, attained considerable renown abroad for their audacious modernist efforts. From this international public image correspondence, prizes, like the Pritzker for Barragán, awards, and international commissions were gained. [440]

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[439] Jennifer Josten, "Color as Local and International Value in Mathias Goeritz's Architectural and Urban Sculptures," in *Defying stability: 1952-1967,* ed. Rita Eder (Ciudad de México: UNAM/Turner, 2014), 306-311.

[440] Pani and Goeritz received a commissioned in 1970 to design a skyscraper in Caracas, Venezuela for the Capriles conglomerate.

For international marketing purposes, Goeritz's *Torres* became one of the strongest icons of modernity for a nation during an industrialization and modernization project. Goeritz exemplifies the artist as builder of utopias whose work strives to edify structure, harmonize, and find balance in a country plagued by disorder, inequality, chaos, and imbalance. The geometric abstract art project is, at core, optimistic and even utopian. The constructivist artist believes that art can be an instrument by which to transform society. He wants to build a new reality that, if possible, extends into the socio-political sphere. In a social and historical context in which destruction, deconstruction, and fragmentation have been constants, the artist has sustained interest in constructing, creating, assembling, and edifying serves as a striking contrast. Art historian Frederico Morais asserts that only in developing countries can Constructivism in art be understood as political. He states, "If in culturally saturated, developed societies, total nothingness arises as an aesthetic perspective, in our emerging societies, where there is so much to be done and constructed, constructivist art goes beyond the realm of the aesthetic to become ethical and even political."[441]As previously stated, the *Torres* symbolized a transformation, a new urban culture, and became the modern face of the Mexican State while encapsulating the collective hopes of modernity. The graphic image of the *Torres* was used in numerous advertising campaigns, and their significance was articulated again in 1967 at international campaigns promoting the Olympic Games of 1968.

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[441] Frederico Morais, *Mathias Goeritz* (México City: UNAM, 1982), 45.

As discussed by scholar Ruben Gallo, the Mexican concept of institutionalizing the Revolution simply refers to the corporatist nature of the political party PRI—that is, "the PRI incorporated the 'disruptive energy' of the Revolution (and thereby ensured its own longevity) by co-opting and incorporating its enemies into its bureaucratic government as new institutional sectors." [442] Whenever the party faced opposition, they responded by incorporating the group or individual into its massive bureaucracy. In the 1940s, the party made the labor unions a sector of its political system. Over the years, the PRI would repeat the same strategy, when industrialists, farmers, and so on were incorporated to the party by the creation of a sector for each group. By doing this type of strategies, the PRI was in power for seventy-one years. In 1990, Mario Vargas Llosa, the Peruvian Nobel literature prizewinner, scandalized México by describing the country as "the perfect dictatorship." He was referring to the decades of rule by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) that, in keeping with its Orwellian name, had co-opted most of the country's institutions, including businesses, unions, peasants, intellectuals and the media. Some critical intellectuals were co-opted by persuading them to accept a cultural attaché or ambassador position in an attractive city, all done in an elegant way to avoid hurting susceptibilities.

[442] Ruben Gallo, *New Tendencies of Mexican Art: The 1990's* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2204), 135.

MODERNIST SHORTCOMINGS

Hosting the 1968 Olympics was supposed to herald México's entry into the "first world" club of nations, a public relations bonanza that would mark the nation's coming of age. Increased tourism, foreign investment, and a vigorous nationalist spirit were all heralded as the "intangible benefits," as Avery Brundage[443] had once articulated. Many though, not all, of these benefits were canceled out by the flagrant repression against student protesters and foreign questioning of México's hyped "political harmony." For Mexicans, the Olympics would be forever marked by that repression. While some people remain firmly convinced that it was the students who were to blame, most of the public opinion view the government as the clear-cut culprit. The tremendous logistical accomplishments and artistic fervor that were a direct outgrowth of planning for the 1968 Games and the Cultural Olympiad are easily over-looked or hastily dismissed. The brightly painted sculptures along the *The Route of Friendship*, commissioned to stand as a testament to the nation's forward-looking sensibility, have become silent, defaced tombstones of a modernist moment defeated.

Throughout the 1960s, Mexicans struggled on two fronts: on one hand, against the hypocrisy of a political party government whose practices mocked a public facade of democratic process and respect for human rights; and, on the other, to overcome a sense of marginalization and denigration that located México as a nation still "developing." Accepting the challenge of hosting the Olympics was part of a broader strategy of urban modernization dating to the 1940s. By the 1960s, this strategy had embraced important

[443] President of the International Olympic Committee.

aspects such as new urban design and infrastructure, especially in México City. It also included playing host to international sporting, scientific, and cultural conferences. This plan created an opportunity for the ruling regime to displace middle-class and popular sector criticisms regarding the lack of democratic process (and widening inequalities in income distribution) toward support for the nation's evident material advances. At the same time, a strategy to modernize the country helped recast entrenched foreign stereotypes regarding Mexican "efficiency" and "stability." Arguably, the strategy had worked as evidenced by domestic and foreign support for the Olympics as the date of the Games approached. The challenges posed by the student movement, however, changed everything. Through the protests and ensuing repression, Mexicans and foreigners alike were reminded that beneath the psychedelic logo of México *68* lie in wait a persistent reality of economic inequalities and political authoritarianism which discourse, and spectacle alone could not make disappear.

The Route of Friendship shows us that utopian thought cannot do justice to the contradictions that characterize reality. Bridges, second floor highways, high-rise buildings, now surround most of the sculptures and the visual impact of the works has suffered tremendously. From a utopian dream, the sculptures are now in a dystopian condition. As a utopian dreamer, Goeritz did not count on the indiscriminate growth of the city, which now threatens to bury the sculptures, and have completely changed the visual experience of the viewer (Figure 35). In a paradoxical twist, some of the sculptures look like they are in a cage like the visual imagery that Revueltas gives the reader of the prison cells with *El Apando.*

Conclusion

The Route of Friendship was bittersweet. On one hand, Goeritz had the distinction of creating the contemporary artistic image of the country broadcasted to the world. Eighteen years before, Rivera and Siqueiros wanted him out of the country. On the other hand, the student movement had a violent and deadly outcome. For Mathias Goeritz, who escaped the violence of World War II, it was devastating. His work became repetitive for many years afterwards until he created the museum *Jerusalem Labyrinth* in 1978-1980 and his last collaborative project: *Espacio Escultórico* in 1979.

The Olympic Games in México City offered a renewal strategy based primarily on depiction. They were the first Olympic Games in the world televised in color, and 'aired' live via satellite communications, confirming the profound relevance given to their representation as image. The social crisis characterized by the student rebellions of 1968, came to a head with the Tlatelolco massacre in which military forces killed hundreds scarcely ten days before the games inauguration. The exaltation of structures of power, exemplified by the relevance given to the formal power of institutional architecture, set the tone for a city that wanted to be seen from the outside, and was therefore made to be perceived in motion, primarily through television, by car or by plane.

Goeritz's work offered an important conversation in the language of geometric abstraction; he was able to transcend this specific formal context and engage in experiences that involved not only the spectator but also certain social, economic, and political particularities of the '50s, '60s, and '70s. Via the above-mentioned elements

Museo Experimental: el eco, Torres de Ciudad Satélite and Ruta de la Amistad, constitute an invaluable tool for the understanding of Mexican modernism and its implications. In this sense, Goeritz, amongst those of his generation interested in formal searches related to geometric abstraction, could capture the "side effects" of modernity and the outcome of the country's short-lived utopia of progress.

Torres de Ciudad Satélite can be considered one of the most utopian works of Latin American art in existence. For Goeritz the process of accomplishing utopia was a self-generating one. According to people that knew him well, like Ida Rodriguez Prampolini and Pedro Friedeberg, Goeritz was a very human and romantic person. His utopic projects like *School of Altamira*, *El eco* or *Torres* come from an emotional process driven by his ideas and ideals. After all, according to William A. McClung, "an invented utopia is an empty space inviting development."[444] Utopias are causally related to expansion and the removal of constraints The *Torres* sat in an open field were pirule trees were cut down to make the new subdivision. The *Torres* also indicated, as stated by James Oles, "a new direction for Mexican art, away from didactic muralism and towards a powerful and seemingly neutral form of public abstraction more amenable to politicians, in their idealized forms and utopian reach."[445] He brought to the production of sculpture a new visual language and one only does that by having utopian dreams.

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[444] Cited on Ehrhad Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 1.

[445] James Oles, *Art and Architecture in México* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013), 329.

The five concrete towers of unequal height are situated on a plaza in the middle of a heavily used highway. The *Torres* varies in height from 100 to 177 feet or 31, 37, 40, 46 and 50 meters respectively. The *Torres* render a communal space a focal point of transit, experienced in repetitive movements that take significance from their presence; that is, they ritualize the public encounter. The *Torres* broke the boundaries between sculpture and architecture. In this case, as a work of art conceived from the position of a viewer in an automobile and understood in formal terms as an intervention into the built environment. They are considered iconic, and they have been promoted by the local government to be included into the protected UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. Goeritz would change the face of sculpture in his adopted country, by trying to recapture the magnitude and solemnity of ancient pre-Hispanic art and adding his own aesthetic. There is monumentality in the *Torres* which is substantial beyond size, greatness and a kind of absolute, and triumphant character. Considered by many scholars as the key work of urban art of the twentieth century: as a, before and after type of work.[446]

By midcentury, after the tumultuous years of the Mexican revolution, an industrial production based country was emerging. This moment coincides with modern architecture in México, which had started in the 1940s, and Goeritz's abstract monumental sculptural work was an excellent representation of modernity. Internationally, abstraction dominated painting, between 1945 and the late 1960s, but as this work proves, not in México, where Goeritz championed it, especially in monumental

[446] Fernando González Cortázar, "Las Torres de Ciudad Satélite: cincuenta años de un milagro," in *Las Torres de Ciudad Satélite* (Ciudad de México: Arquine and INBA, 2014), 25.

sculpture. Abstract art was born in the early part of the 20th century, when some artists turned away from realistic representation and the depiction of the human figure, and moved increasingly towards abstraction.[447] Latin America, at mid twenty-century, experienced an economic boom and avant-garde artists found in abstract art aesthetics the best vehicle to convey their artist's experience of modern life.

Like European neo-avant-garde artists of the time, such as Yves Klein, Goeritz sought to reformulate the production, reception, and function of art. But he did so in a different way. While a large part of the neo-avant-garde worked within the parameters of Marcel Duchamp's Dadaist legacy, Goeritz was influenced more by Hugo Ball. Goeritz believed that the neo-avant-garde merely critiqued the conventional status of art while failing to produce any positive changes in the relationship between artworks and their users. Goeritz own work aimed at transforming the role of art within society without resorting to the neo-avant-garde's self-destructive negativity. Instead, he sought to turn that negativity into a productive force by reintroducing subjective experience and emotions into modern art and architecture. This aim was part of Ball's more humanistic legacy, as Goeritz had understood it from his reading of Ball's Dadaist diary of 1927, *Die Flucht aus der Zeit* (*Flight Out of Time*).[448] Goeritz stood out among his Mexican peers for his outspokenness that art validates and transforms man.

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[447] One of the first examples of abstract art is the 1874 work by James McNeill Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket*.

[448] Rita Eder, "Ma Go: visión y memoria," in *Los ecos de Mathias Goeritz* …, 40.

Goeritz combined his European heritage with his experience of Mexican culture to produce a unique art. In it elements of Dada, German Expressionism, geometric abstraction, constructivism, concrete poetry, and European philosophy are combined with a new vitality found in postwar México. Goeritz adopted De Stijl's use of bold, geometric forms and brilliant color that was augmented by Reyes Ferreira's hue sensibility. Size and scale mattered to Goeritz, as he elaborated in Clive Smith's book,

> Volumes of monumental size interested me now. I dreamed of an immense cathedral or pyramids, I always have been astounded by the magnificence and the proportions of the constructions at the archeological sites I have visited in many parts of México.[449]

Goeritz's artistic contributions are important not only within the context of the country or culture in which they were created (this has been known for a while), but also within a larger art historical context. After all the history of art in México is not the one portrayed in books or in exhibitions, but the one made by all the artists that have been excluded from it. In other words, it is the undiscovered works that co-exist with the better-known ones that many times shed light on. He was equally isolated, at different times, from both the European neo-avant-garde and the Mexican muralist tradition. His work, beginning with *el eco,* developed new artistic practice. Like his neo-avant-garde contemporaries, his work questioned both the status and purpose of the work of art. Nevertheless, his art, unlike theirs, was meant to have use-value and demanded active engagement, beyond passive contemplation, from the viewer. In addition, unlike the

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[449] Clive Bamford Smith, *Builders in the Sun: Five Mexican Architects* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., Inc, 1967), 136-137.

Mexican muralists, his art did not rely on pictorial legibility for its effects. Instead, it transformed space to provoke an emotional response outside of the parameters of reason and logic. Goeritz's work attacked the increased institutionalization and commodification of art and its separation from the user and his or her life. His work represented a new system for creating meaning and "useful" art and architecture that aimed at the collective transformation of society.

Several chapters explored Goeritz's prolific work as a writer, whose rich correspondence can be consulted at his archive in *Centro de las Artes* in México City and at the Instituto Cultural *Hospicio Cabañas* in Guadalajara. As Theodor Adorno brilliantly observes, "For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live."[450] Goeritz found in writing "a place to live." Goeritz's, self-imposed exile in México allowed him to know the general feeling that people have of being rooted in a place. Indeed, the twentieth century was the age of the refugee, the displaced person, and mass immigration Goeritz relied on several mechanisms to cope with uncertainty and other emotional issues that affect the immigrant subject. His outgoing personality perfectly represented the modern spirit with several intellectual qualities: lucidity, irony, and intellectual curiosity, combined with passion, a sense of technical experimentation, and an awareness of living in a tragic era. The term, tragic era, applies to the period after WWII where discussion of themes such as trauma, anxiety, and alienation were prevalent

[450] Quoted on Ehrhard Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 25.

in post-war art. Jean-Paul Sartre exemplified the European author with his writing about Existentialism. According to art critic Dore Ashton, Abstract Expressionist artists were most familiar with Sartre's writing as argued on her book *The New York School: A Cultural Reckoning.* In this book the tragedies, such as the victory of fascism in Spain, have a treatment of preventing similar calamities in the future, rather than asserting in a resigned manner that tragedy could not be avoided. Misfortune in art is treated as a passionate lamentation about things that should never have happened.[451]

The role of Goeritz in México was not only as a reinvigorating agent of artistic modernity in the postwar era but also as an extension of an international network. He possessed many contacts and was fluent in multiple languages. Additionally, discussion of México's unique position regarding the potential cultural threats of modernization shed light on the stakes behind Goeritz's undertaking. It is through understanding the history of México's complex relationship with modernity and internationality that the value of Goeritz's oeuvre blossoms. The muralist school had a hegemonic role since the early 1920s and the creativity of the movement had run its course. Furthermore, the muralist school did not allow for other aesthetics to flourish; Rufino Tamayo[452] lived for several years in New York and then Paris for this reason. Nothing better represents that artistic moment than Siqueiros' proclamation: "*There is no art route but ours."*[453] It was

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[451] Dore Ashton, *The New York School: A Cultural Reckoning* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1992).

[452] Goeritz Organized in Guadalajara Arquitact gallery, September 1951 an exhibit of Tamayo's. Exhibition invite at Goeritz archive at Instituto Cultural Cabanas.

[453] Quoted in Olivia Zúñiga, *Mathias Goeritz* (Ciudad de México: Editorial Intercontinental, 1963), 35.

like a collision of two different cultures. Indeed, the muralist's tradition that was avant-garde in the 1920s was totally outdated by the late 1940s.

According to Goeritz, "the problem that the art of our times faces is the lack of an aesthetic with an ethical basis… if artists did subordinate their aesthetic principles to a spiritual aim, it would be possible for them to achieve works with greater substance and importance…great art has always been a service."[454] In a letter to artist Pedro Friedeberg, he wrote: "During all my ambitious life I haven't invented anything. This is unfortunately, no false modesty but an honest conviction. My ideas, considered by you 'avant-garde' or modern are generally more than one hundred years old. There is only a change of focus. . . [an attempt] to SERVE, spiritually and materially."[455] As mentioned throughout the different chapters, spirituality was the thread of his artistic practice. It is articulated in most of his writings and manifestos.

His teaching activities at the University of Guadalajara allowed a continuous exercise of visual experimentation, an exercise that would continue for over twenty-five years. It was in Guadalajara where his paintings were first exhibited in México and where he executed his first monumental work, *El Pájaro Amarillo*. In 1994, in return for all the generosity Goeritz received during his life, Goeritz's last companion Ana Cecilia Treviño decided to donate the artistic and archival collection that she had inherited from

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[454] Mathias Goeritz, "Aclaración," in *Arquitectura/México* (June 1962): 122.

[455] Quoted in Olivia Zúñiga, *Mathias Goeritz* (México: Editorial Intercontinental, 1963), 47.

Goeritz.[456] The Instituto Cultural Cabañas is the recipient of this legacy. The collection is comprised of works spanning virtually his entire artistic production: works on paper produced in the ’40s and later, sculptures in bronze, metal, and wood, the gourds series, the *Milky Way* sculptures, among other works. His extensive archive includes photographs and wide-ranging correspondence that Goeritz received from friends, artists, intellectuals and scholars from all over the world.

Goeritz marked the cultural milieu of México, not only through his original artistic practice, but also through his pedagogy, his writing of art criticism, and his work as an organizer, promoter, and curator of exhibitions and art symposia. Goeritz established his roots in México where he developed several interests from his many facets: sculptor, painter, architect, poet, professor, art critic and philosopher. The goal of this work is to help reframed the conventional canon of modern Mexican art. What is at the heart of the work of Goeritz is the idea of the experimental as an exercise, as a practice of self-formation, and of crossing disciplines. In words of art historian and curator Cuauhtémoc Medina, “there has been an institutionalized amnesia regarding the legacy of artists like Mathias Goeritz who opened new paths in art.” [457] Since Medina wrote this opinion, in 2006, scholarship in México regarding Goeritz work has changed

[456] Ana Cecilia Treviño was Goeritz significant other for the last 15 years of his life. Goeritz never divorced the art historian Ida Rodríguez Prampolini.

[457] Cuauhtémoc Medina, “Genealogy of an Exhibition,” in *The Age of Discrepancies: Art and Visual Culture in México 1968-1997*, ed. Olivier Debroise (Ciudad de México: UNAM / Turner, 2006).

for the better. In 2014, a major retrospective of Goeritz work was exhibited at the Reina Sofia museum, in Madrid, and México.

Since my graduate degree is in Latin American Studies, with a concentration in art history, I have tried to provide a broader context to Goeritz's work through the incorporation of literary work and Mexican religion history. By employing a cross-disciplinary method, I aim to bring new light not only to the artist's work but also to the zeitgeist of this point in time. Moreover, I aim to address a constellation of themes related to the effects of political, economic, and social contexts and how Goeritz's works were conceived to explore the ways artists and architects have responded to this set of conditions. I hope that this work continues the effort of destroying certain stereotypical notions of "Mexican art." The formulaic notion regarding twentieth century Mexican Art is that of Social Realism. Goeritz's oeuvre disrupts the conventional paradigms, which Mexican art has been presented internationally, especially in the United States, and more scholarship needs to be undertaken to present the many faces of modern Mexican art. It is a disservice to artists like Goeritz, Cueto, Mérida, Gerzo, among others, which advanced art to new ways of representation.

Goeritz's architecture started from a poetic rather than a technical image that resisted objectification. From the creation of *el eco*, to interventions in churches to *Torres de Ciudad Satélite*, the resulting spaces themselves defy the objectification of its representation, as one can only approximate the description of its spatial unfolding. The enduring significance of his work is its ability to reintroduce the temporality of human experience in the conception of architectural spaces, subvert the culture of overt

architectural representation, and conceive of architecture as an 'event' emotionally born out of and supported by the void. In the past one hundred years artists have been working and involved with spiritual ideas and belief systems. Their art reflects a desire to express spiritual, utopian or metaphysical ideals that cannot be expressed in traditional pictorial terms.

Indeed, being 'in place' involves a range of cognitive (mental) and physical (corporeal) performances that are constantly evolving as people encounter place. Exploring the connections between Goeritz's experiential properties of space and the writing of Yi-Fu-Tuan[458], reminds us that people do not live in a framework of geometric relationships but in a world of meaning. Geographer Yi-Fu-Tuan's poetic writings stress that place does not have any particular scale associated with it but is created and maintained through the 'fields of care' that result from people's emotional attachments. Tuan's work alerted scholars to the sensual, aesthetic and emotional dimensions of space. This approximation corresponds to Goeritz's main artistic goal of creating emotion. The emotion is conceived as a category of the aesthetic and art as an instrument of emotional communication.

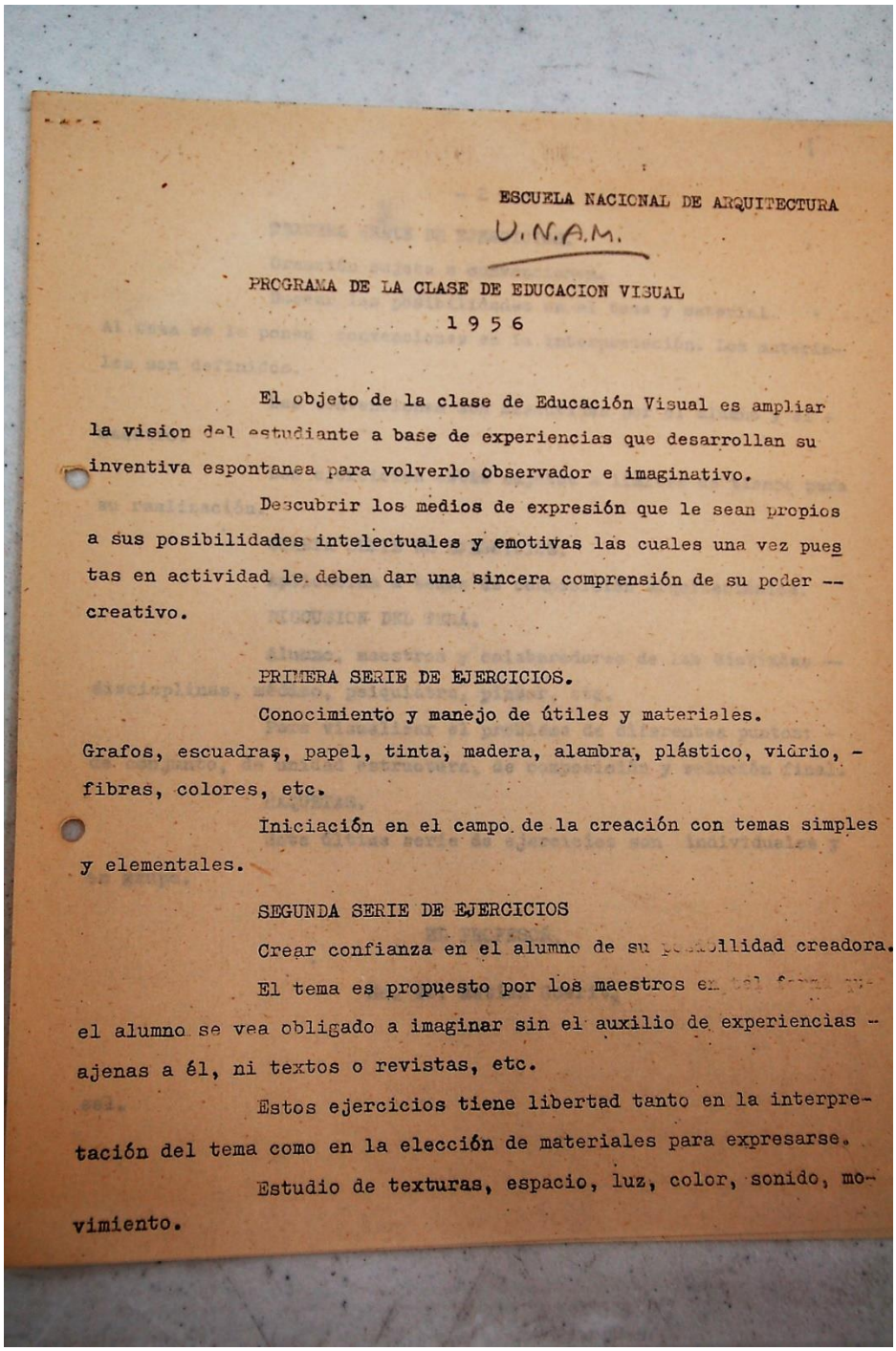
[458] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977-2008).

Illustrations

Figure 1. *Museo Experimental: el eco.* c. 2010. Photographer unknown. Photograph courtesy of http://beaudouin-architectes.fr

Figure 2. Mathias Goeritz, *Proyecto de telón para el Gran Guiñol Andaluz,* 1947. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

Figure 3. Invitation to exhibition Arte Sin Fronteras. Art Gallery founded by Mathias Goeritz: Arquitac. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.



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Conocimiento y manejo de útiles y materiales. Grafos, escuadras, papel, tinta, madera, alambra, plástico, vidrio, - fibras, colores, etc.

Iniciación en el campo de la creación con temas simples y elementales.

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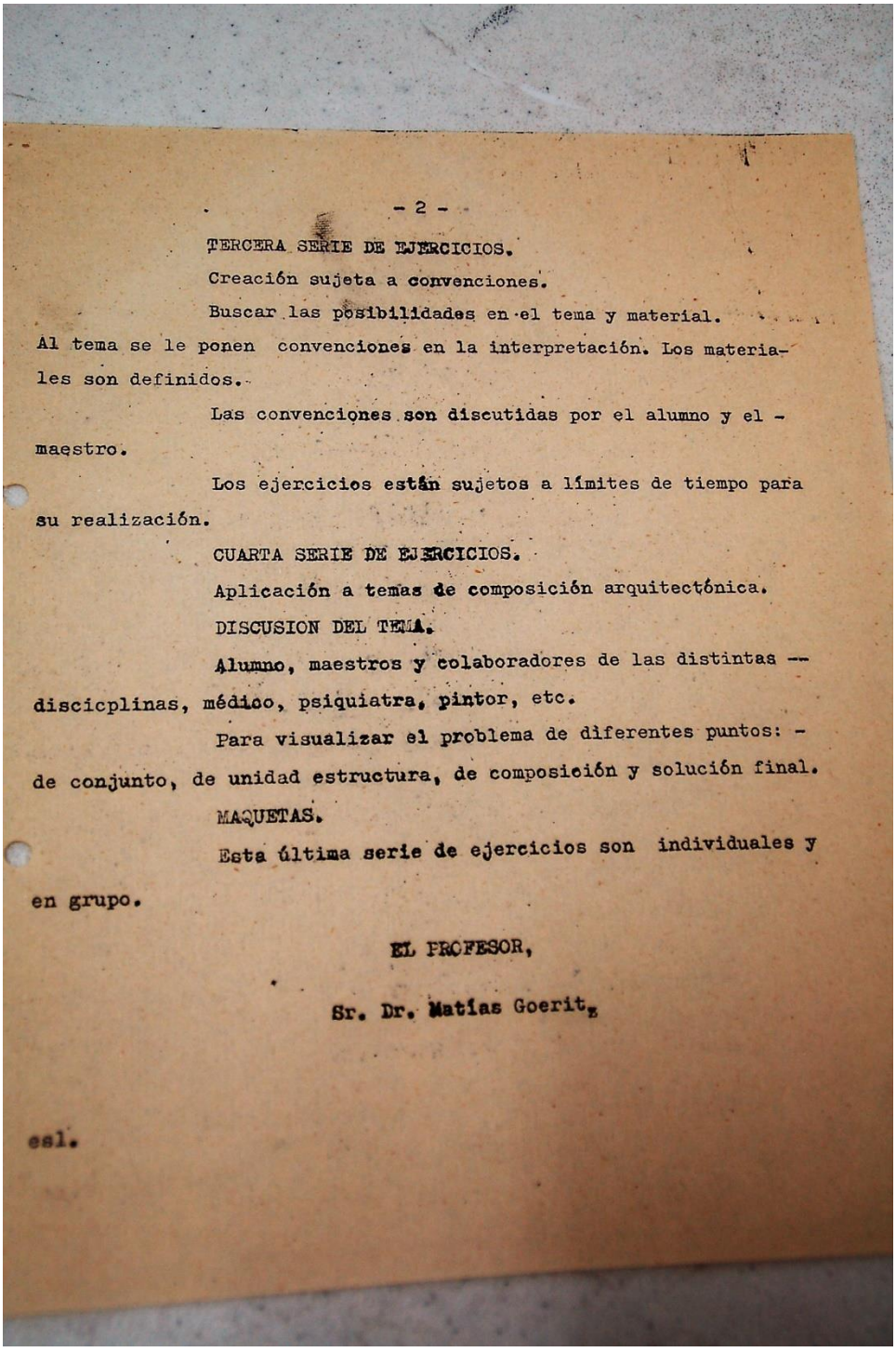
Crear confianza en el alumno de su posibilidad creadora.

El tema es propuesto por los maestros en tal forma que el alumno se vea obligado a imaginar sin el auxilio de experiencias - ajenas a él, ni textos o revistas, etc.

Estos ejercicios tiene libertad tanto en la interpretación del tema como en la elección de materiales para expresarse.

Estudio de texturas, espacio, luz, color, sonido, movimiento.

Figure 4. Visual Education Program, Architecture School, UNAM. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.



- 2 -

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Creación sujeta a convenciones.

Buscar las posibilidades en el tema y material.

Al tema se le ponen convenciones en la interpretación. Los materiales son definidos.

Las convenciones son discutidas por el alumno y el maestro.

Los ejercicios están sujetos a límites de tiempo para su realización.

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Aplicación a temas de composición arquitectónica.

DISCUSION DEL TEMA.

Alumno, maestros y colaboradores de las distintas disciplinas, médico, psiquiatra, pintor, etc.

Para visualizar el problema de diferentes puntos: de conjunto, de unidad estructura, de composición y solución final.

MAQUETAS.

Esta última serie de ejercicios son individuales y en grupo.

EL PROFESOR,

Sr. Dr. Matías Goeritz

esl.

Figure 5. Visual Education Program, Architecture School, UNAM. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

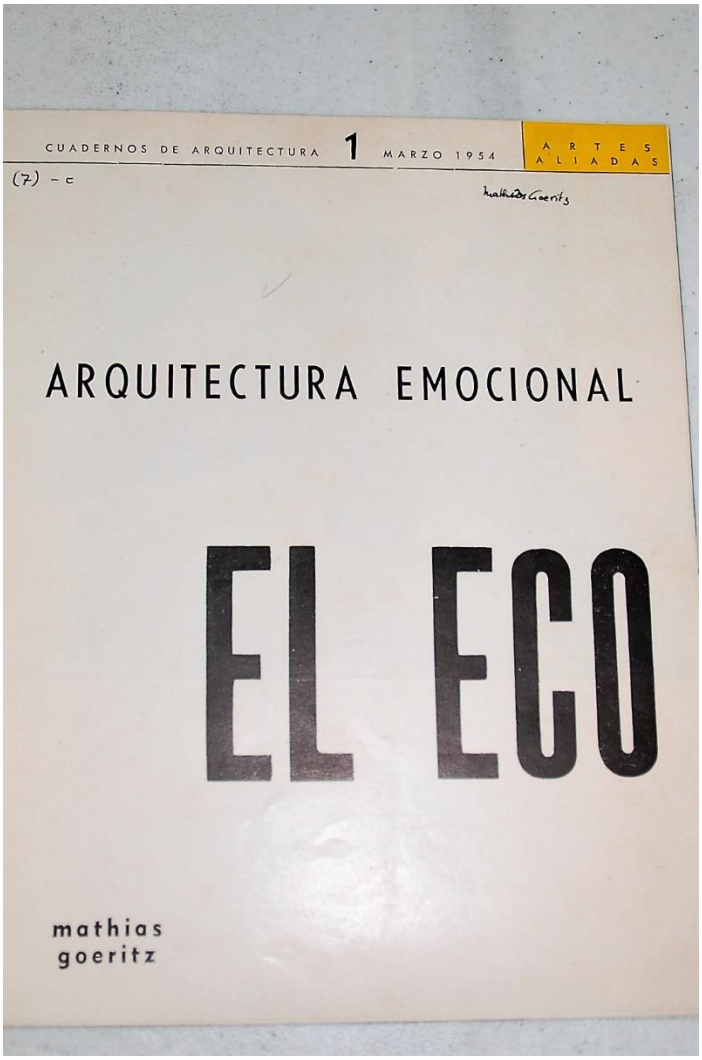


Figure 6. Mathias Goeritz, “Manifiesto de Arquitectura Emocional,” was published for the first time, as “Arquitectura Emocional: El eco,” in *Cuadernos de Arquitectura,* num. 1 (Guadalajara, 1954): s.p. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guad

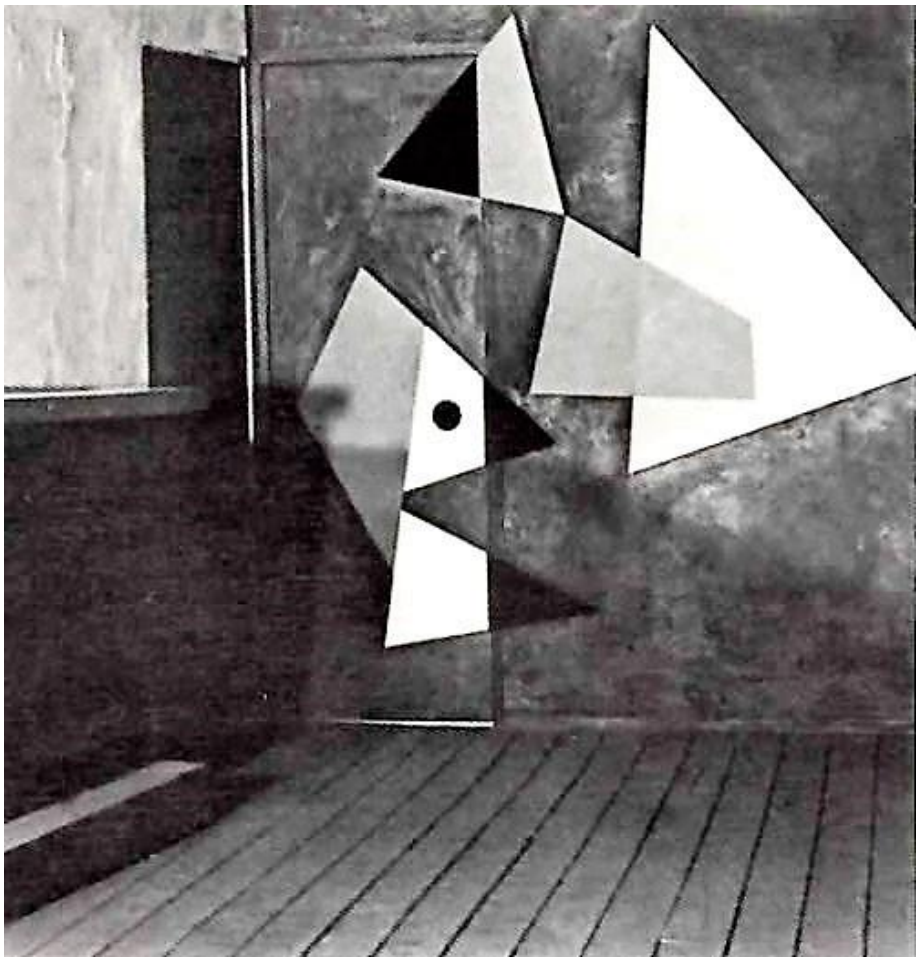


Figure 7. Carlos Mérida relief of polychrome wood, 1953. *Museo Experimental: el eco.* Photographer unknown. Photograph courtesy of http://beaudouin-architectes.fr

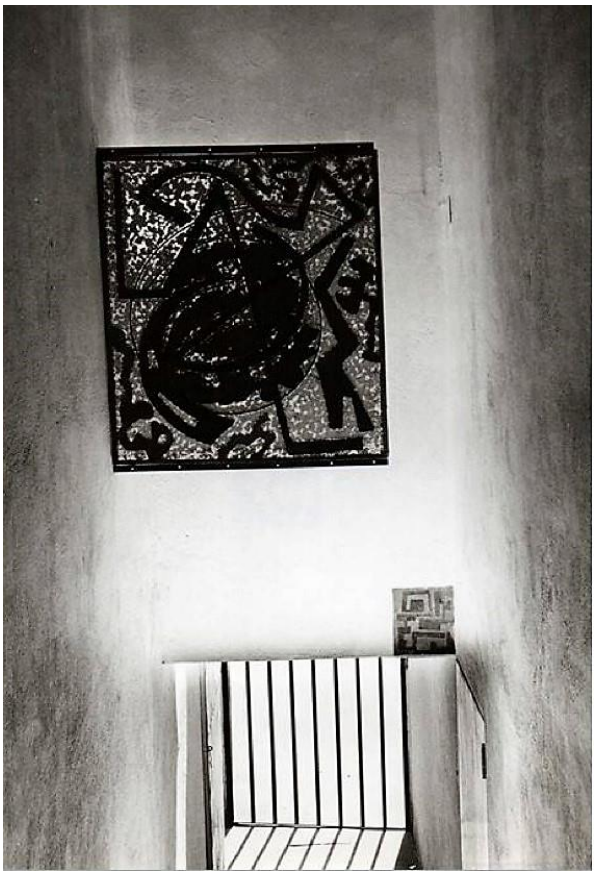


Figure 8. Relief of German Cueto, 1953. *Museo Experimental: el eco*. Photographer unknown. Photograph courtesy of http://beaudouin-architectes.fr

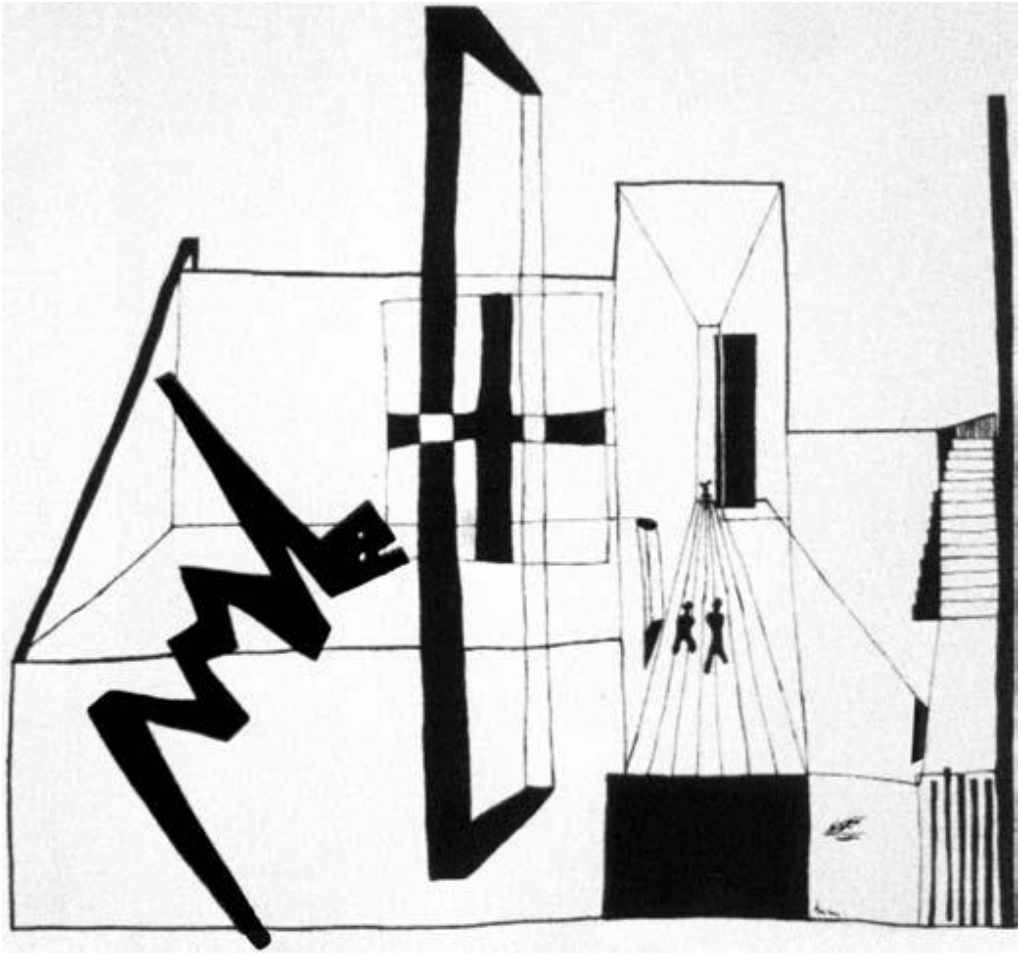


Figure 9. Conceptual drawing of *El eco*, 1952. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

Figure 10. *Poema Plástico.* Photograph by Ana Patricia Ruiz-Healy.

Figure 11. *Serpent* Museo Experimental: el eco. Photograph by Marianne Goeritz. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

Figure 12. “Serpent” sculpture, Tenayuca Pyramid, Circa 1350. Reprinted from Josef Alberts in Mexico. Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2017.

Figure 13. *Mano Divina,* 1954. Iglesia San Lorenzo Diácono y Mártir. Photograph by Ana Patricia Ruiz-Healy.

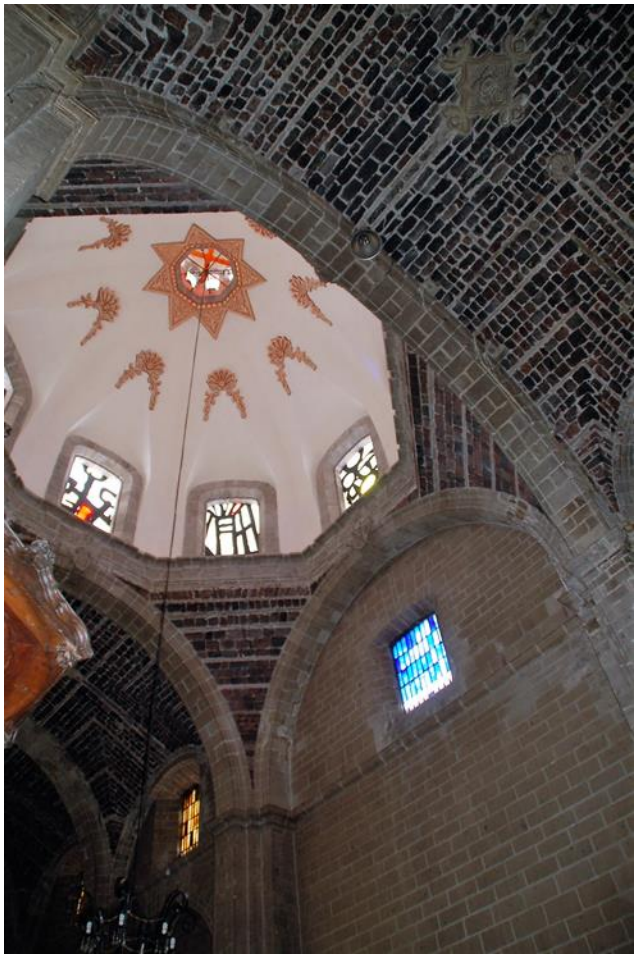


Figure 14. Stained-Glass work, 1954. Iglesia San Lorenzo Diácono y Mártir. Photograph by Ana Patricia Ruiz-Healy

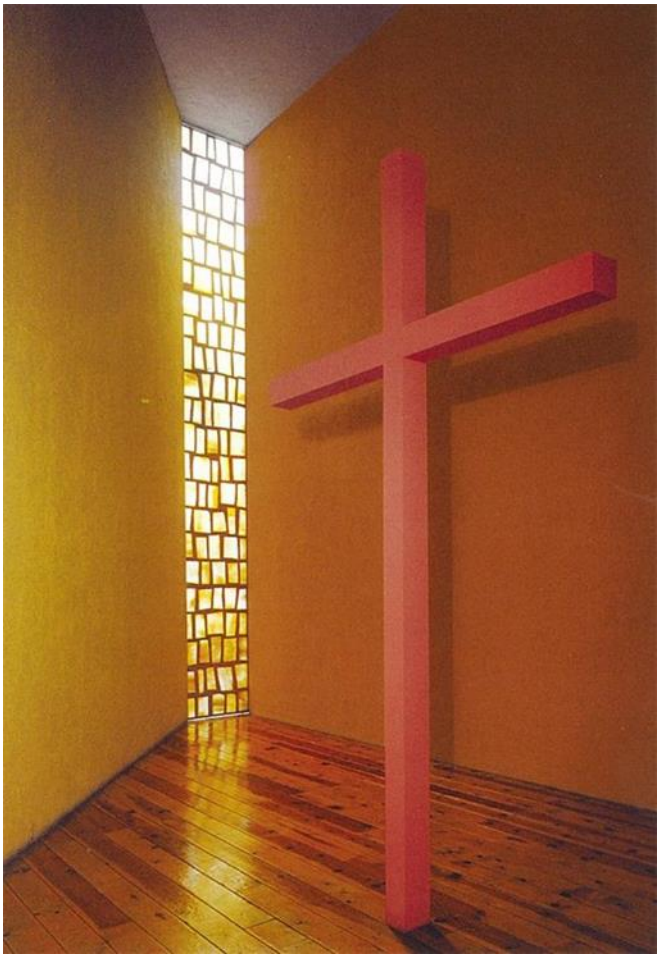


Figure 15. *Torre de Luz,* circa 1957. Convento Capuchin Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary in México City. Photographer unknown. Photograph courtesy of http://beaudouin-architectes.fr

Figure 16. Mathias Goeritz, Cathedral Metropolitana, 1960. Photographer unknown. Reprinted from Artes de México, núm. 94 (2009), 70.

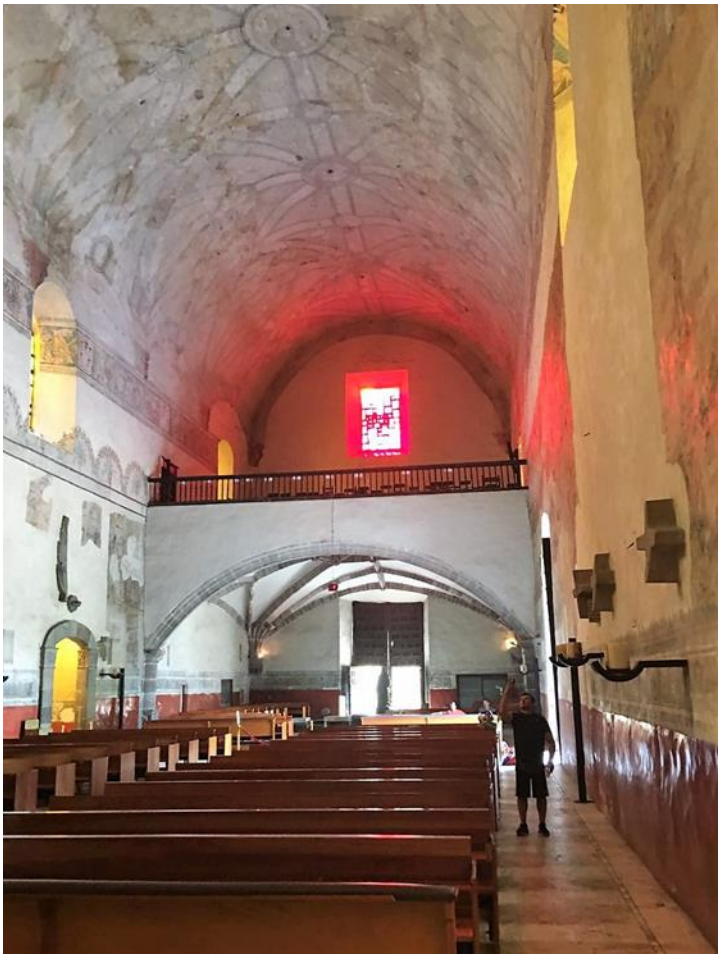


Figure 17. Mathias Goeritz, Stained-Glass work, 1961. Cuernavaca Cathedral. Photograph by Juan Ruiz-Healy.

Figure 18. Mathias Goeritz, Stained-Glass work. San Felipe y Santiago, Azcapotzalco, 1961-62. Photograph by Ana Patricia Ruiz-Healy.

Figure 19. Mathias Goeritz, Stained-Glass work. Parish of Santiago, Tlatelolco (1963-1964). Photograph by Ana Patricia Ruiz-Healy.

Figure 20. Mathias Goeritz, Altar, Parish of Santiago, Tlatelolco (1963-1964). Photograph by Ana Patricia Ruiz-Healy.

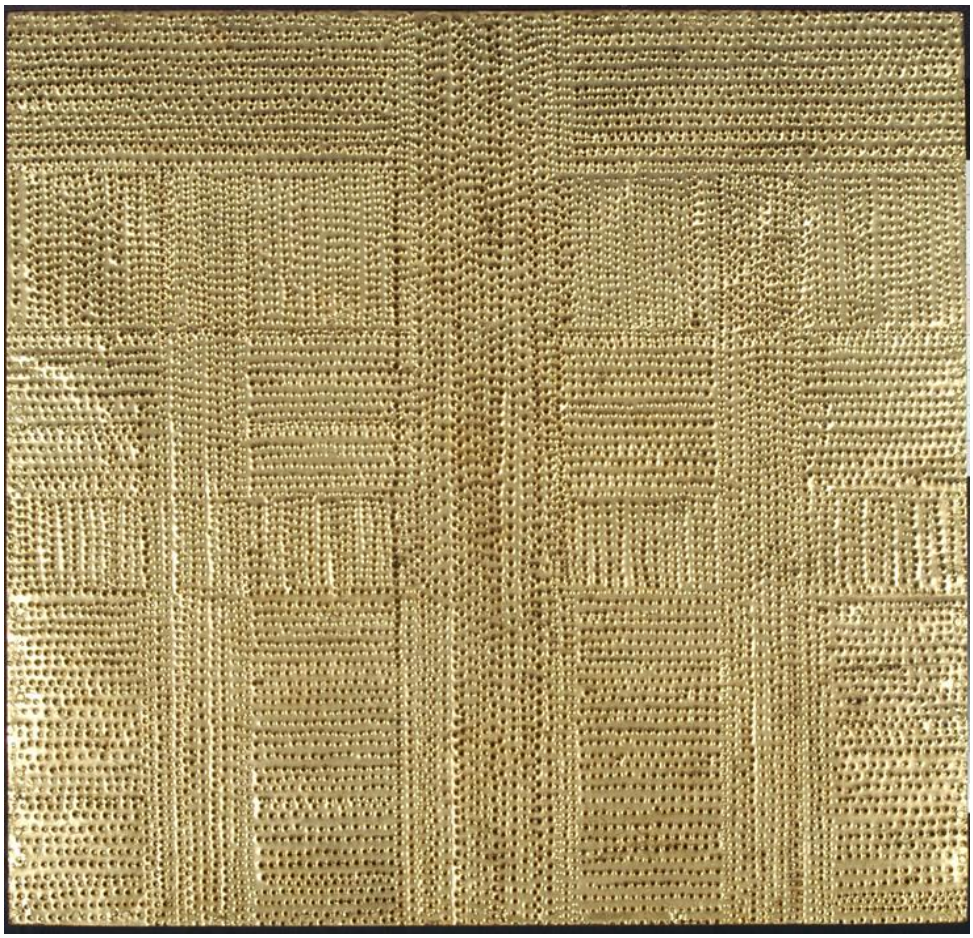


Figure 21. Mathias Goeritz, *Mensaje Las Cruzes*. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

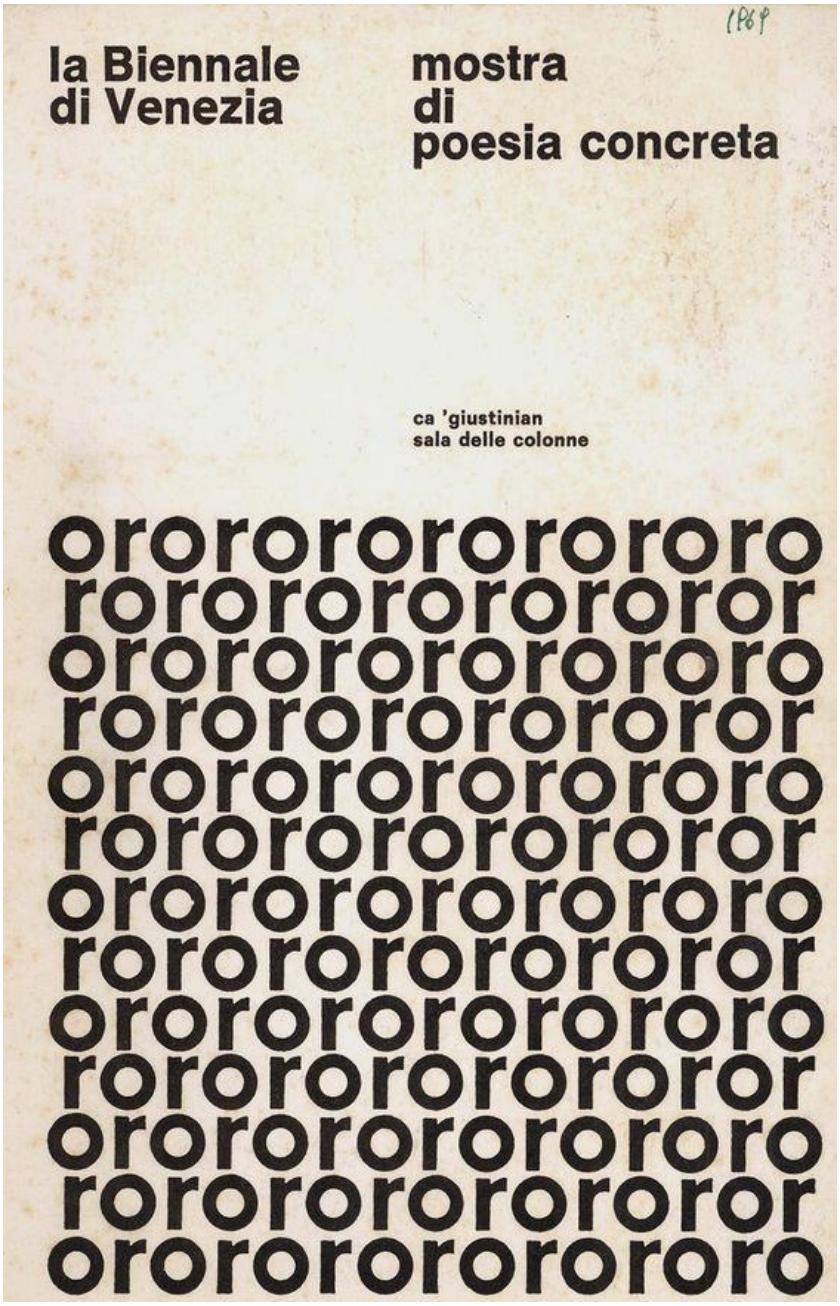


Figure 22. *Die Goldene Botschaft* (Mensaje de Oro) exhibition catalogue cover published in conjunction with the show held at the Venice Biennale: *Mostra de Poesia Concreta*, September 25 - October 10, 1969. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, G

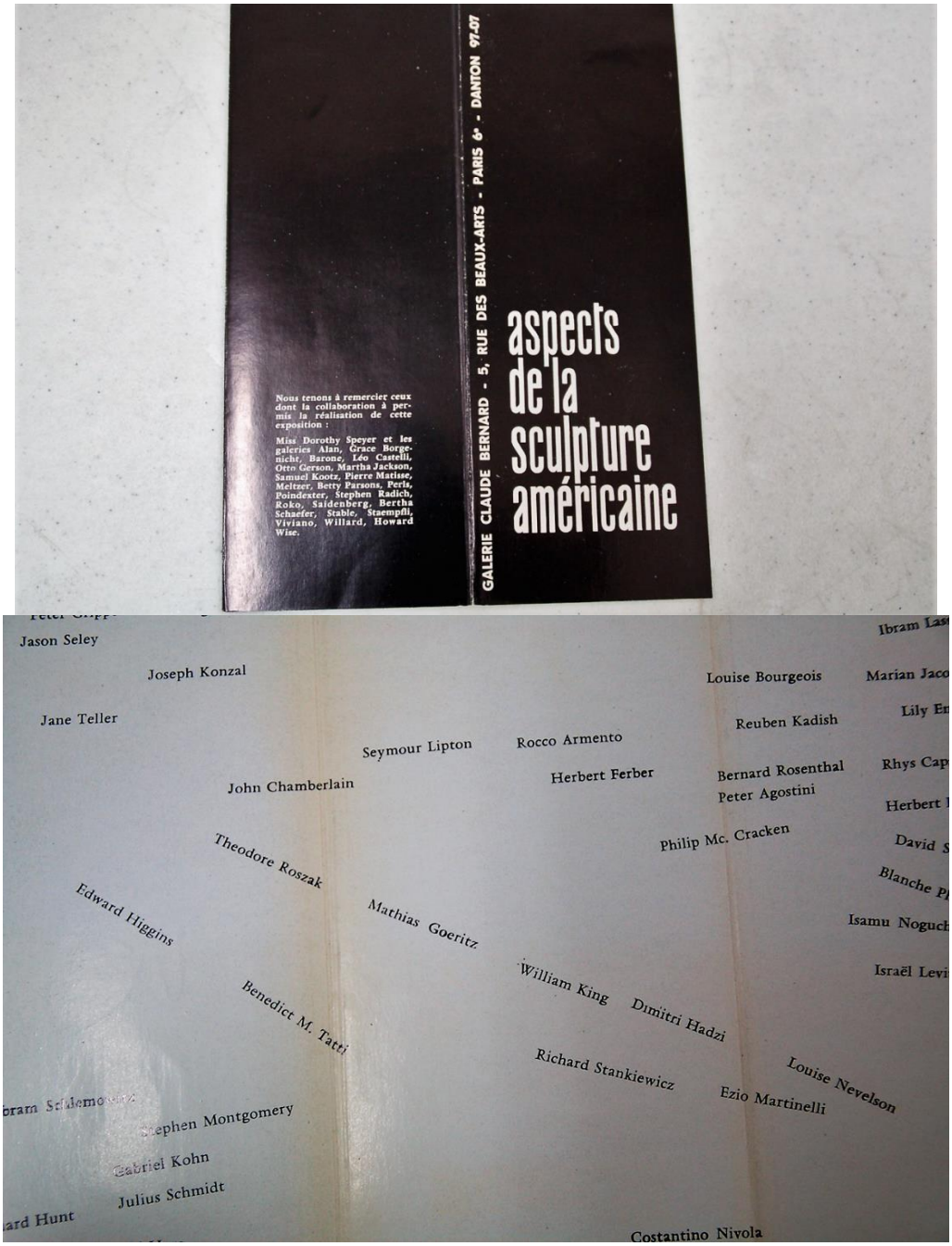
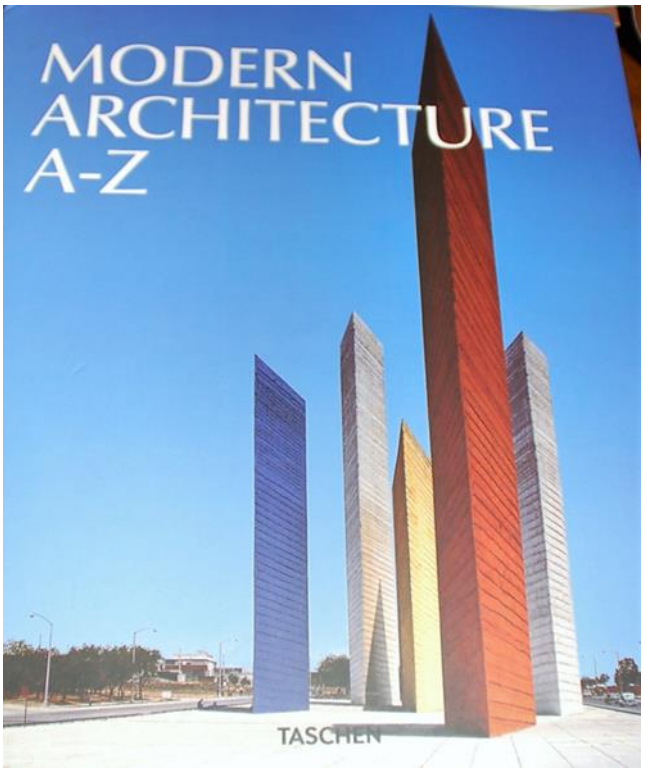


Figure 23. Brochure *Aspects de la Sculpture Americanie*. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

Figure 24. *Torres de Ciudad Satélite* in 1957. Photographer unknown. Reprinted from Lily Kassner, *Mathias Goeritz: Obra* 1915-1990.

Figure 25. Mathias Goeritz, *Torres de ciudad* satélite in 1968. Photographer unknown.



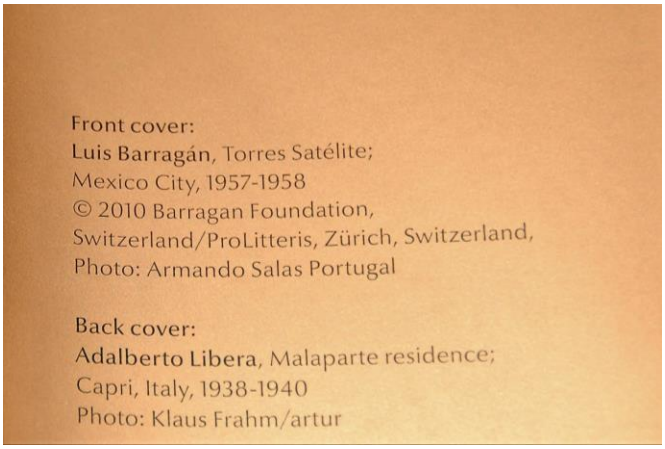


Figure 26. Taschen cover book.

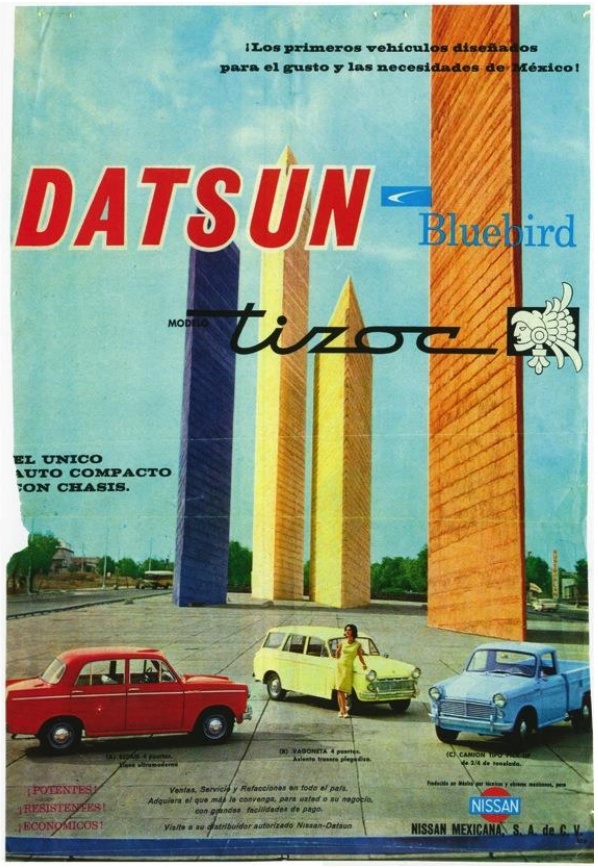
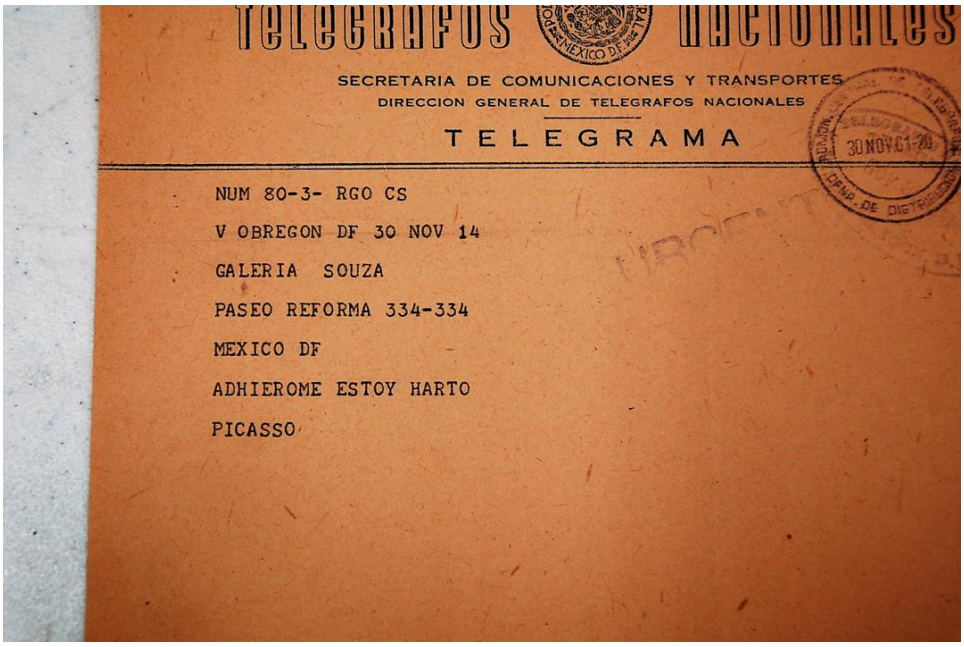


Figure 27. *Torres* images used as background in advertisement. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

Figure 28. *Torres de Ciudad Satélite.* Photo taken by author in 2009.


TELEGRAFOS NACIONALES

SECRETARIA DE COMUNICACIONES Y TRANSPORTES

DIRECCION GENERAL DE TELEGRAFOS NACIONALES

TELEGRAMA

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NUM 80-3- RGO CS

V OBREGON DF 30 NOV 14

GALERIA SOUZA

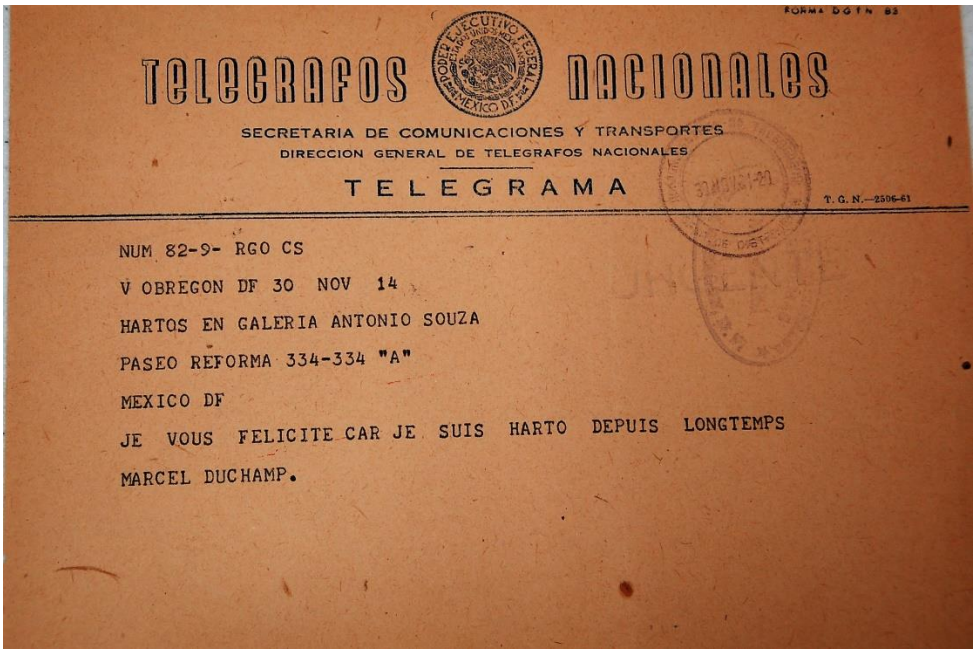
PASEO REFORMA 334-334

MEXICO DF

ADHIEROME ESTOY HARTO

PICASSO

Figure 29. Telegram sent by Pablo Picasso, for *Los Hartos* movement. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.



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TELEGRAFOS NACIONALES

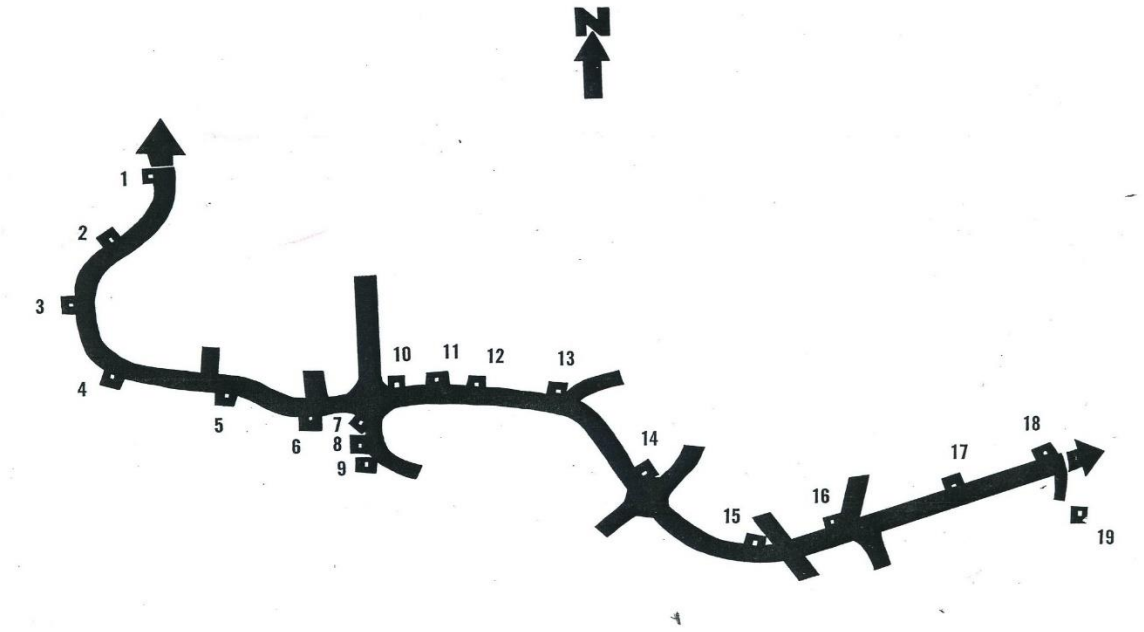
SECRETARIA DE COMUNICACIONES Y TRANSPORTES
DIRECCION GENERAL DE TELEGRAFOS NACIONALES

TELEGRAMA

T. G. N.—2506-61

NUM 82-9- RGO CS
V OBREGON DF 30 NOV 14
HARTOS EN GALERIA ANTONIO SOUZA
PASEO REFORMA 334-334 "A"
MEXICO DF
JE VOUS FELICITE CAR JE SUIS HARTO DEPUIS LONGTEMPS
MARCEL DUCHAMP.

Figure 30. Telegram sent by Marcel Duchamp, *Los Hartos* movement. Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.



RUTA DE LA AMISTAD
WEG DER FREUNDSCHAFT

1	ANGELA GURRIA	MEX	8	JACQUES MOESCHAL	BEL	15	ITZHAK DANZIGER	ISR
2	WILLI GUTMANN	SUI	9	TODD WILLIAMS	EUA	16	OLIVER SEGUIN	FRA
3	MILOSLAV CHLUPAC	CHE	10	GRZEGORZ KOWALSKI	POL	17	MOHAMED MELEHI	MAR
4	KIOSHI TAKAHASHI	JPN	11	JOSE MA. SUBIRACHS	ESP	18	HELEN ESCOBEDO	MEX
5	PIERRE SZEKELI	HUN-FRA	12	CLEMENT MEADMORE	AUS	19	JORGE DUBON	MEX
6	GONZALO FONSECA	URU	13	HERBERT BAYER	AUT-EUA			
7	COSTANTINO NIVOLA	ITA	14	JOOP J. BELJON	HOL			

Figure 31. *Ruta de la Amistad.* Colección Mathias Goeritz, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara.

Figure 32. Advertisement for the *Route of Friendship*. Archive CENIDIAP-INBA. Fondo Mathias Goeritz.

Figure 33. Mathias Goeritz, *Osa Mayor* (Big Dipper), 1968. Photographer unknown. Photograph courtesy of http://beaudouin-architectes.fr

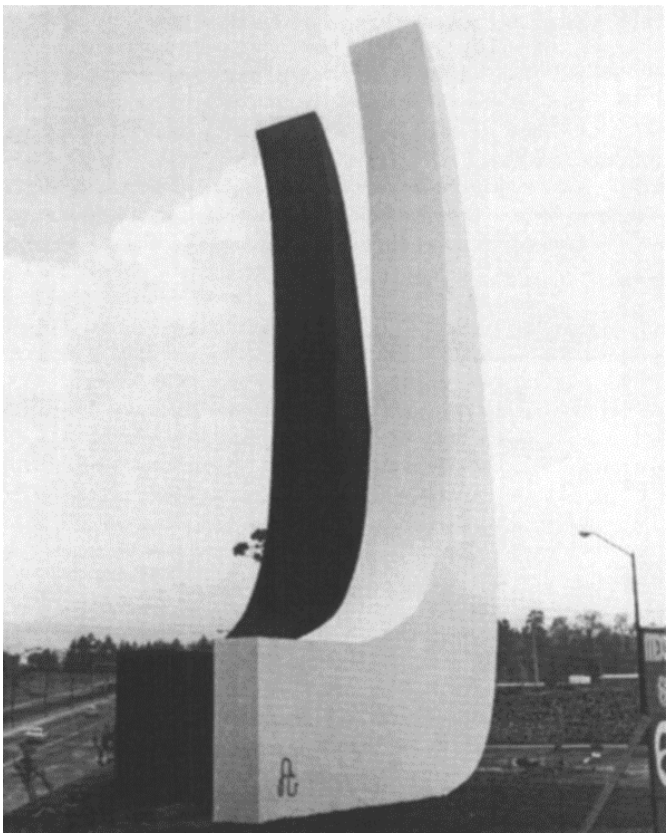


Figure 34. Angela Gurria, *Signals,* 1968, *The Route of Friendship.*

Figure 35. Angela Gurria, 1968 *Signals, the Route of Friendship*. Photograph taken in 2009 by Ana Patricia Ruiz-Healy

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